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Simples from the Master's Garden

Annie Trumbull Slosson, Charles H. Stephens,
Sunday School Times Company

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FROM

Esher E. Hinds
Cambridge

**SIMPLES FROM THE MASTER'S
GARDEN**



APPLES FROM THE MASTER'S GARDEN

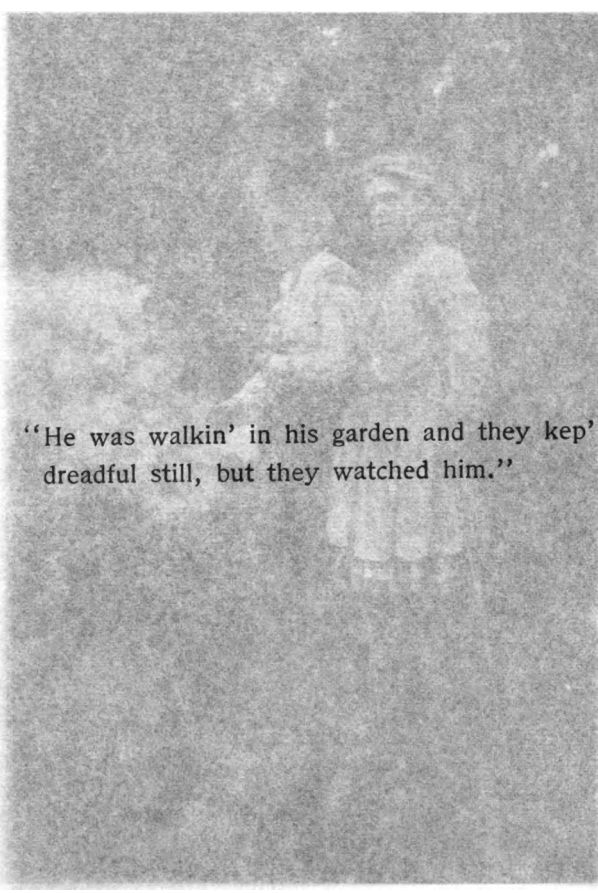
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
"Aunt Abby's"...

"He was walkin' in his garden and they kep'
dreadful still, but they watched him."

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
"Aunt Abby's"...

OF SUNDAY...

A grainy, black and white photograph of a person standing in a garden. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved garment and a hat. The background is dark and indistinct. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

“He was walkin’ in his garden and they kep’
dreadful still, but they watched him.”

SIMPLES FROM THE MASTER'S GARDEN

ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON

Author of "Fishin' Jimmy," "Story-Tell Lib,"
"Aunt Abby's Neighbors," etc.

"For there be manie weedes that being
medicinable we call them simples."
—*Old Herbal.*

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES COMPANY
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Asher E. Hinds
Cambridge

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THE MASTER'S GARDEN

THE MASTER'S GARDEN

LITTLE Elizabeth Rowena Marietta York sat there under the maples in front of the old farm house. It was in Greenhills, the mountain village where the child lived and where on many summer days I had listened to the simple stories she told. For she had a gift, almost the only one she possessed, of telling tales, original and full of hidden meaning. She was sadly crippled, a fragile, delicate, puny child, quite unlearned, unable even to read or write. But we who heard the allegories or parables which fell from her lips in the dialect of that northern hill country, learned many things we shall never forget. Because of this one talent—God-given, I like to believe—she was known throughout that whole region as Story-tell Lib, and I never think of her by any other name.

On this summer day as she sat there, her little crutch by her side, the sunlight drifting through the maple leaves upon the thin, white

The Master's Garden

face and lighting it up, she told the tale which follows. A little humpbacked boy of the village, called by the neighbors in love, not ridicule or contempt, Stoopin' Jacob, had brought to his little lame friend a bunch of simple, spicy herbs, sarsaparilla, spearmint, pennyroyal, prince's pine, and other such homely plants, prized for no beauty of bloom or leafage, but for certain wholesome, health-giving properties they possessed or were thought to possess. Little Lib held these herbs in her wasted hands and their penetrating odor came to us as we sat there, comes to me now as I retell her story.

LIB'S STORY

Once there was a—I was goin' to say a man, but mebbe I better say—a Person. Folks call him a dreadful lot o' things, jest as he strikes 'em most, you know. Some allus speaks on him as the Shepherd, and it's a good name for him, for he has ever'n ever so many sheep and he takes dreadful good care of 'em. There never was a sheep man that minded his flocks so careful, allus seein' that they shan't want for anything, takin' 'em out along the

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streams to water 'em and showin' 'em where the best pastur's is with the greenest, juiciest grass. And the lambs—oh, you ought to see him tend to the lambs! There wa'n't never anybody so good to lambs as him. If they're lost, strayin' off from the mother sheep and get scaret, or if they're hurted or sick or—lame, why he jest takes 'em right up in his arms and cuddles 'em up close to him, inside his coat I guess, and he carries 'em till they feel easier. Oh, I tell you, it's terr'ble comfortin'.

And there's other people call him the Gard'ner, 'cause he sets so by his garden and his posies and growin' things. I'm a goin' to tell you more about that part bimeby. Ag'in there's folks speak about him as the Physician—that's a doctor, you know, only a bigger word. That ain't a bad name, neither, for he's allus a curin' and helpin' ailin' people, stren'thin' folks that's weak and tired, quietin' them that's fevered and nervy and puttin' them that lays awake too much, to sleep. Sometimes they say—and I believe 'em—he makes deaf men hear and blind men see. And he ties up hurts and puts 'intments and salves on 'em that takes

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out the ache and—oh, he's just one o' the bestest doctors, you never never see. So they call him one thing or 'nother as he 'pears to 'em.

Sometimes they say he's like the sun, he's so shinin' and warmin' and lighten' up and brightnin'. Some man said he was like a great big rose o' some place or 'nother, makin' the whole country 'round sweet-smellin' and beautiful and bloomy, and—I tell ye there wa'n't nobody ever called so many splendid names as that man—I mean Person. But there's one name they give him I like best of all and that's the Master. I don't hardly know why I set so much by that name, only I kind o' like to learn things, and to have somebody that's got the say tell me 'zackly what to do. I like to have lessons give me and copies set for me, and I don't scursely mind the punishin' for breakin' rules a mite, not if he does it. 'Taint real punishin' ye know; it's only jest showin' you he notices and takes an int'rest and helps you to rec'lect you ain't goin' the way he showed you. So I call him the Master most times, and I'm going to call him that now.

Well, he's got a garden. Some holds he's

The Master's Garden

got ever so many gardens, but for me, seem's if it was all one great big, big garden, big as the whole airth but sot off into lots of little gardens, all kinds, and different's they can be. Some on 'em's full o' big sightly posies, ever so high, all red and yellor and striped and spotted. Folks can see 'em from way off and they think they're dreadful handsome, and they be. They chirk folks up and help 'em jest by growin' up so rugged and bein' so healthy and sightly and sech. Then there's gardens where all the posies are sweet smellin' and the smell reaches never so fur off and everybody that lives round that deestrick smells 'em and likes it and feels better for it. And—oh, there's a terr'ble lot o' gardens and he knows 'em every single one and takes care on 'em all, different as they be. Well, one day there was somebody goin' round 'mongst them gardens. I guess she was a girl and not a very big one. And she wa'n't very rugged, nor very nice lookin' nor—very spry; mebbe she limped kind of and had to have suthin' to lean on when she walked. She had somebody else with her, kind o' the same sort. He was a boy, and—there was suthin' the

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matter with his back and it hurt awful. He wa'n't rugged neither, and he had a real hefty thing to carry 'round, and he was a mite tired o' doin' it.

So them two people couldn't do scursely anything for the Master and it made 'em real sorry and kind o' shamed, for they liked that Master. Well, as I was tellin' ye, they was walkin' round them gardens of his'n one time, that girl a limpin' along and him a stoopin' over with all he'd got to carry about and both on 'em sort o' feelin' inside—if they didn't really talk it out—that they wa'n't much 'count and never could do a single thing to help that Master o' theirs. And they liked him. They see the big sightly posies, high and straight and rugged, shinin' with red and yellor till it most made their eyes water, and they smelt the sweet smellin' blooms, like roses and lilies and all, and they see trees and bushes jest jam full o' fruit and berries for hungry and thirsty folks. They see plants sent off to stand in meetin' houses Sundays and learn folks things; they see posies all shinin' white to pick and put 'round little dead children, and—oh, they see such lots

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o' splendid handsome blowths that looked 's if they was allus doin' good to folks someways, and it made 'em sorry for theirselves.

Pretty soon the bright colored posies tired their eyes and the sweet smells was most too sweet and the trees most too high to look up at so they turned off into a kind o' shady place way back in a corner, and there they see the queerest little garden; it looked 's if it made itself and 's if nobody 'tended it. There wa'n't no shinin' colors in it, no tall, sightly plants, no roses nor lilies, nothin' but weedy, greeny things, with teeny bits o' humly posies on some on 'em or bunches o' seedsy lookin' green things for blowth. They was close down to the dirt, sometimes spranglin' over it a mite, but never climbin' up high. They wasn't trimmed off nor trained up much, nor weeded I guess, 'cause they looked like weeds theirselves. The girl, she jest says "Oh my!" And the boy says right after her, "Oh my!" Then they kep' quiet. It 'peared so terr'ble sprisin' to find that humly weedy lot o' plants in the Master's garden.

Bimeby one on 'em says, "Mebbe he don't

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know about it, it's way off back here in the corner."

"Guess that's so," says the other, "for there ain't no bright colors to show and no sweet smell to reach folks fur off, so I bet he ain't never took notice o' this place 't all."

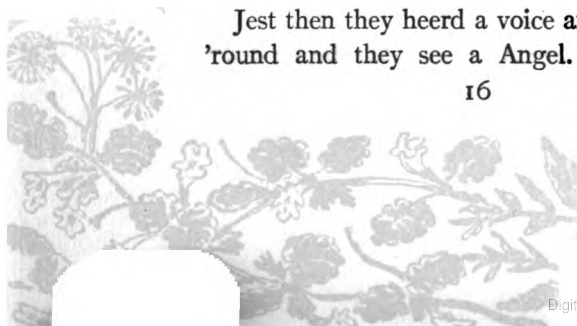
"I don't see how that can be, though" says t'other one, "for they say he takes notice of everything, even little specks o' chippy birds tumblin' out o' their nests; so it stands to reason he's seen this."

"You'd think he'd a dug it up then," says the other, "and set out some scrumptious posies here."

"I guess he's givin' it one more chance," says the other feller, "they say he's great on givin' chances, the Master is."

"Well, he'll root it out pretty soon," one says, "that is, if he takes notice of it 't all. But I don't b'leeve he ever comes 'round this place. He must set so much by them big, handsome posies I bet he stays over there most times."

Jest then they heerd a voice and they looked 'round and they see a Angel. They'd seen



The Master's Garden

'em before and they knowed right off what it was. It spoke most in a whisper and it said "Look there." And they looked and they see the Master. He was walkin' in his garden and they kep' dreadful still, but they watched him. He come along by the big handsome posies and looked at 'em satisfied like, but he didn't stop. And he walked by the sweet smellin' blowths and you could see he took notice of the nice smell spreadin' all 'round never so fur, and he liked it but he didn't stop. And he see the shinin' white lilies showin' folks how clean and white things can be, and then he most stopped. The young ones they thinks to theirselves, "Mebbe he's come down into the garden to pick lilies," but he didn't stop. He passed right along by the trees and the bushes jam full o' fruit and berries, and he looked 's if he knowed 'em every one by their fruit, but he went right on without stoppin'.

And fust thing they knowed there he was close to 'em and right by that little common lookin' weedy bed. They kep' dreadful still, but they watched him. They



The Master's Garden

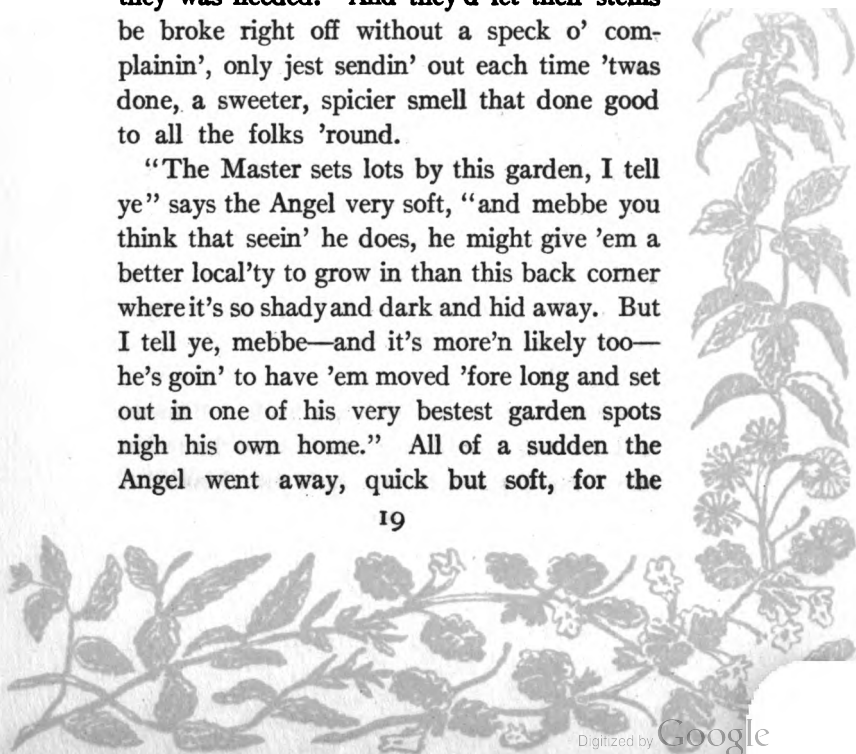
thought he'd show he wa'n't jest sat'sfied and mebbe he'd begin pullin' up the plants that instant minute or tellin' his hired men to do it. But they see sech a pleased kind o' lovin' look come over his face and he stopped. He stooped down and felt o' the leaves, sort o' smoothin' 'em down's if he liked to touch 'em, and he picked some on 'em soft and gentle like and held 'em up to his face, and then the child'un begun to notice there was, after all, a real nice smell, a mite bitter, but kind o' sweet, all spicy and woodsy that come from them plants and the air jest 'round 'em was full of it and it made 'em feel good and more rugged right off.

They didn't know what it all meant till the Angel spoke to 'em again in a kind o' whisper but so's they heerd every word. It told 'em that corner full o' weedsy, common-lookin' things was one of the Master's fav'rite posy-beds, nothin' sat'sfied him more'n that. For every single plant in it was a healin' plant, good for some sickness or ache or hurt. And they give sech little trouble, jest keepin' there in that back corner, in the shade, growin'


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and breathin' out their sweet and bitter and woodsy smell. Sometimes, the Angel said, they had to be hurt a mite, their leaves took off to use to stop pain, their blowth all picked to help the ailin' and again their roots themselves dug up for doct'rin' them that needed that kind. But they took it all pleasant and patient, lettin' go their leaves and their blooms theirselves to help, and loosenin' their roots away from the dirt so's to come up easy when they was needed. And they'd let their stems be broke right off without a speck o' complainin', only jest sendin' out each time 'twas done, a sweeter, spicier smell that done good to all the folks 'round.

"The Master sets lots by this garden, I tell ye" says the Angel very soft, "and mebbe you think that seein' he does, he might give 'em a better local'ty to grow in than this back corner where it's so shady and dark and hid away. But I tell ye, mebbe—and it's more'n likely too—he's goin' to have 'em moved 'fore long and set out in one of his very bestest garden spots nigh his own home." All of a sudden the Angel went away, quick but soft, for the



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Master was passin' by. He had a little bunch o' leaves in his hand, and there was the nicest smell, kind of bitter and sort o' sweet, come to the child'un waitin' there and wishin', wishin' hard, they could do the leastest little bit of a thing to help folks and show how much they liked the Master. They didn't think he'd seen 'em 't all, for they was a scroochin' in the very darkest corner, hidin' away so's not to pester him any. But jest as he was goin' by 'em he turned his head a mite and looked at 'em, and he smiled. Seems 's if he see 'em, but I ain't certain sure, 'cause—wa'n't it sing'lar?—'t was most zackly the same kind o' smile they'd seen on his featur's when he was lookin' at the poor humly, weedsy plants in that little dark back garden.

Jest then they see the Angel had come back and was standin' close by 'em. And one o' the child'un says in a teenty whisper to the Angel, "Did ye see the Master a smilin'?"

"Sure," the Angel whispers back. "Seems 's if he was lookin' our way," says the tother one, "but I guess he was on'y jest thinkin' o'

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that air fav'rite posy bed o' his'n and them
poor humly, weedsy plants that done all they
could do for folks—and for him."

"Like as not; like as not," says the Angel.

A SIMPLE CROSS-BEARER

A SIMPLE CROSS-BEARER

MANY years ago I was a Sunday-school teacher in a New England town. My class was made up of girls from ten to thirteen years of age, and numbered only five or six members. These were bright, intelligent children, very responsive and appreciative, and the Sunday afternoon sessions were all too short for both teacher and scholars. The girls were full of eager questions, which I as eagerly answered to the best of my ability. I had won their confidence; they talked to me with utter frankness, and commented freely with little self-consciousness or shyness on the lesson for the day.

Small as was the class, it seemed to me just the right size and composed of exactly the right material. So I felt a shade of annoyance or disappointment when asked to add to it a new member. As I entered the school one Sunday, a little while before the service began, the superintendent called me aside and asked if I had

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room in my class for Ruth Stanton. I did not know the name, and hesitated, fearing that the freedom and harmony of our little circle might be seriously affected by the introduction of a new element.

Mr. Jarvis saw the hesitancy, and went on rather pleadingly: "I do hope you can receive her," he said; "I have asked several other teachers, and all have refused. I am so sorry for the poor child, for she is a dear little girl." Then he told me that Ruth had a serious impediment in her speech, and few could understand what she said. On this account, teacher after teacher had asked her removal from the class, unable to interpret the stammering speech. The child was so pained and mortified by this banishment, and also by the treatment received from some thoughtless classmates, who laughed at her attempts to make herself understood or shrank openly from her companionship, that she had begged to stay at home in future. The parents were Christian folk, and naturally anxious that the little girl should receive religious instruction with other children of the church. What should he do? I was his last

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hope, he said. I could not resist this appeal and the thought of the sensitive child exiled for no fault of her own, and I at once promised to receive her the next Sunday.

Then I went to my class. I was pretty sure of my girls, but felt I must prepare them for the introduction of a new scholar, and have a little preparatory talk over the situation. When I told them that Ruth Stanton was to join our little circle, each face wore a look of consternation, and one after another began protests, earnest but respectful. It would spoil everything; did I know how queerly Ruth talked; I could never understand her; she was sulky and stupid; nobody liked her or wanted to go with her; she would not care for the nice stories I told them or ask questions about the lesson as they did; if she did ask nobody would know what she meant, and—again came the old lament, “She would spoil everything.”

I did not scold; it was not a time for that, but I tried to show them another side to the question. I pictured as well as I could the lonely child, avoided by others because of a trouble for which she was not to blame, her seeing that she



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was not wanted by teachers or scholars, changed from class to class till too hurt and grieved to come again to the school. I asked them if they themselves might not seem "sulky" or "stupid" if afraid to speak lest some one laugh, or at least fail to understand their words. Then a few hints or suggestions, not at all in the nature of sermonizing, about self-denial and kindness to others, the Golden Rule about which we had recently been talking, and the field was won. The kind little hearts were touched, and every child agreed to welcome Ruth Stanton to the class.

I had sympathized fully with their dread of the coming change, for I myself felt many fears as I thought of the incongruous element about to be introduced into our pleasant service. What needless fears they were! But just at first I thought our hesitation justified. When the superintendent came to us next Sunday, leading the shrinking, timid little girl, I found the impediment much worse than I had thought it to be. I could not understand a word of the stumbling speech, and my heart sank. But as the exercises went on I saw plainly there

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was no lack of understanding on the part of the new scholar. She listened intently, with a look of keen intelligence, the blue eyes brightening, the whole face lighted up with interest and understanding. It was a pathetic face, sad, not sullen, the corners of the small mouth drooping, a sort of sorry, grieved expression in the eyes. No child of only twelve years ought ever to have such a face. Finding it so difficult to comprehend her words I asked her no questions that first day. She volunteered a comment once or twice, but seeing that I did not understand remained silent afterward. She was reverent during the prayers, attentive to all that was spoken, found her place at once when the hymn for singing was given out, and followed the words closely as they were sung. But though her lips moved as the other young voices rang out, no sound came from them. It was the little heart which sang. My girls were all kind and considerate, but somehow there was a constraint with all of us, and the session was not, on the whole, such a happy season as was usual with us.

I was somewhat discouraged. How could I

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help this lonesome, unhappy child? How could I gain her confidence and give her companionship and comfort? Well, the first thing was to learn her language. In order to accomplish that I must see her often, and try to make her talk freely. Then by close and patient attention I might find the key to the strange tongue. This plan proved wonderfully successful. I invited her to my home, showed her pictures, games, and curiosities. We walked in our old-fashioned garden and talked of the flowers and butterflies. I visited her at her own home, saw her pretty room with its little treasures, and met her mother and sisters. These relatives were much interested in my efforts to understand and help Ruth, and gave me great assistance, both by interpreting her words when present and allowing her to be with me whenever I wanted her.

It was not as difficult as I had feared it would be. Ruth had an affectionate, trusting nature. She had been rendered very timid and slightly suspicious by the avoidance and shrinking of others, but there was not a grain of bitterness or a tinge of jealousy or malice in her nature.

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I grew very soon to love her dearly, and felt I had won her affection and confidence. It was some time before I could understand perfectly her unchildlike melancholy and spells of depression, though I of course suspected what the cause might be. When I had learned her language, and interpreted for myself the stumbling, impeded speech, I began to see clearly into the troubled little heart. All the sadness and sorrow were because of this misfortune, the burden of an uncomprehended speech, a faltering tongue, a language which seemed to many ridiculous, laughable, and which—worst of all to Ruth—terrified little children. She, in her confidence, dwelt much and tearfully upon this. She was a motherly, doll-loving, baby-loving child, but her advances were often met with such signs of fear, anger, and positive aversion that she had learned to avoid all little ones, to go far out of her way that she might not meet them and see their dislike or terror. A niece of my own, a child of three or four, always screamed with fright when she saw her, so Ruth told me sorrowfully. This almost broke the tender heart.

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"She's so pretty," she said, "so sweet and cute, and I never, never can hug her. I wouldn't mind so much her not loving me, but oh! I just can't stand it to have her afraid of me. As if I would hurt her, Miss Annie!"

To Ruth I became "Miss Annie" soon after our friendship was formed, though the others of the class always used my surname. She was naturally a very sociable child, fond of asking questions, of telling what she knew, of exchanging bits of childish gossip with play-mates, as the others did. But she was almost wholly cut off from these things by her infirmity, and this too was a sore trial.

"I love the girls," she said, "but they don't love me, and I don't blame them. Nobody likes to play with folks they don't understand. You can't whisper secrets with such folks, and intimate friends always have to whisper secrets,—that's what it means, you know. Just think, Miss Annie, I never, never in my whole life had an intimate friend like the other girls."

My heart ached for her, but what could I do? The ordinary commonplaces of consolation, the usual truisms which perhaps ought to

A Simple Cross-Bearer

comfort, but which so often prove ineffective, in this case seemed powerless to help. She wanted to "talk plain like other girls," wanted to be welcomed to their games, their amusements, to share their harmless little secrets, above all, to be loved. Could this ever, ever be? I was not very old myself, and knew nothing by personal experience of great sorrow. So I was somewhat surprised and disappointed that the thought of heaven and the freedom from her present bondage she would find there appeared to hold so little consolation for the child. "But I want it now," she would say wistfully. Heaven seemed so very far off!

Heaven was nearer than she knew. Help came to us both in an unexpected way. In visiting me one day Ruth came across a booklet with bright, attractive cover, and asked me about it. It was the "Changed Cross," a poem first published about that time, I think, and anonymously. Many of my readers will recall it, that story of one who found her own cross, laid upon her by the Master, too grievous to be borne, and begged to choose one for herself. The one selected proves far heavier,

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more unbearably burdensome, and she learns it is far better to trust Him who knows, and to leave all to him. I have not the book at hand as I write, but I am sure that is the drift of the story. Instead of reading the poem itself to Ruth, I told it to her as I was sewing. Interested in my work, I did not at first notice the effect produced upon the child. I think that she did not once speak until the story was finished. I looked up at the last and saw a face alive with emotion. The blue eyes were full of tears, the lips quivering as she burst out in broken sentences almost incoherently, "Oh, Miss Annie, is mine one? Is it His kind? I didn't choose it, did I? Then isn't it the right kind, the one he picked out for me all his own self? I'm glad, I'm so glad!"

At first I did not fully understand her meaning, but it all came to me as she went on. For the first time the child saw her infirmity in the right light. The little story had made her feel that it was her own special burden, laid upon her by her heavenly Father with full understanding of her needs, her strength, and her weakness. Her words in explaining this

A Simple Cross-Bearer

were the words of a child, but they told old and wonderful truths. Somehow at once the sad affliction which had shadowed and embittered her young life became a really precious thing to her. Indeed, she seemed to feel a sort of harmless, childish pride in it as something God himself had asked her to carry for him. "The girls don't know, do they, Miss Annie?" she once whispered; "they just pity me for talking this way, and they don't know what my queer talk comes from, and what it looks like."

"Looks like?" I asked, and she explained that in the story the crosses were different in size and shape and material. So she had formed in her own mind a picture of what her own God-given cross resembled. She never told even me what she saw in that picture, drawn by her childish imagination.

It was like a miracle, it *was* a miracle, the sudden change in the girl. From a sad, morbid, timid child, Ruth almost at once became a happy, wholesome, brave little maid. Her face wore such a loving, cheery look that children did not always shrink from her now, and her schoolmates often let her join them

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in their games. But even a miracle does not change the whole world or one's whole life. The stumbling speech was there still, and even though it was now recognized as a cross to be gladly borne, it sometimes, perhaps often, grew very wearisome to the little bearer.

She was fond of music, and had a good ear. She longed to sing with the other girls. Her lips always moved in unison with their voices, but it was a soundless music. She confided to me once that she could "sing just beautiful inside." One Sunday the old hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood," was given out. Ruth's face brightened, and she whispered to me that this was her favorite hymn, "Because it tells about me," she added, and when we came to the lines, "when this poor, lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave," and the child looked up meaningly, I understood.

After her lesson taught by the poem she changed her attitude toward many things, and this was particularly noticeable in her talk about a future life and the many mansions. She had turned almost impatiently in the past

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from my well-meant, but perhaps unwise, attempts to comfort her by a promise of a land of rest. Now she very often introduced the subject, and loved to dwell upon it. This was not in the morbid, sentimental, or priggish way of which we used to read in biographies of infant saints. It was just simple, childish talk, with artless questions concerning the life there which would be to her, poor child, so different from this earthly existence.

I have never heard anything more touching, more really pathetic, than this little talk of hers. She was very anxious to know just when she could lay her cross down, and be told she had borne it worthily. She took her Bible literally, as simple souls do. One day she had been reading a chapter in Revelation about the Holy City, and she said, "There are twelve gates, it says, Miss Annie. I've been thinking that perhaps one of those gates is just for the folks who've got crosses. Some crosses are very big, you know, and some are very prickly and sharp, and they'd be dreadfully in the way when people were crowding in. So I guess there'll be a sign up on one gate telling all the

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folks that have got crosses to come in there, and I'll go through that one with my own little cross, this lisping, stammering tongue" (as she spoke the words she gave me a knowing, almost merry smile, to remind me of the hymn from which she quoted), "and then—well, I can't make up my mind, Miss Annie, about that. Will somebody come right away and take it off? Or—" she stopped and seemed to be thinking, then, "maybe we've got to show first that we've carried them all right, and not found fault with them, or tried to get rid of them, or change them. I tell you what I'll do, Miss Annie,—I'm going through that gate smiling like this," and she put on her brightest look, "then he'll see for himself I'm making the best of it."

She talked afterward a great deal about that gate, and what was beyond it. She was puzzled about the exact inscription over it, and when I suggested the words, "The Cross-bearers' gate," she clapped her hands with delight. "Maybe I won't know just when He takes it off," she said once, "I'll be standing there just inside that gate, smiling so's he'll

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see I've made the best of my own cross, and didn't ever want to swap it off for another kind. And pretty soon I'll try to speak up and thank him for giving me such an easy one. Then—oh, won't it be splendid, Miss Annie?—I'll find my cross has gone, and I'm talking beautiful. He'd lifted it off quick without my knowing."

She loved to read or hear about our Lord's bearing his own cross to that green hill where he was to give his life for us. I showed her a picture once of Jesus sinking under the weight of that cross, and she looked at it with very tearful eyes. "How big and heavy it looks, Miss Annie," she said. "Did he ever pick out one like that for any one else to carry?" I felt very sure that never was any sorrow like unto his sorrow, and I told her so. "I 'most knew it," she said artlessly. "What a little teeny cross I've got side of his, haven't I? But," she added thoughtfully, "maybe it's about as big as I can carry easy."

At this period she dwelt too much upon this future life. It was not natural for a child, especially a healthy, strong child, such as Ruth

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was. She was a pretty, pink-cheeked little maid. There was no external disfigurement about the mouth such as often accompanies infirmities like that from which she suffered. In all probability she would live many years, and I tried my best to divert her from too much thought concerning the end of earthly things. I was not alarmed by it, however, nor did I think I saw in her talk, as do many in such cases, a premonition of early death. But I pointed out little duties here, kindnesses to show, hearts to win, and wholesome, merry games to join in. I often led her to talk of herself when older, and what she would do, of her music—she was learning to play the piano now—of her studies, and other grown-up pursuits. But in my own heart I looked sadly forward to that growing up. It seemed as if more and more keenly she would feel the mortification and self-consciousness, bitter to her even in her childhood, and that her whole youth would be shadowed by it.

There came too soon a sudden change in our intimacy. Ruth's mother decided to remove to another town far from their present

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home and from me. It was really a sorrow to me, and the little girl seemed inconsolable. At our last interview in my own room she sat in my lap, leaning her head against my shoulder, while we talked of many things. We were to write often to each other, she was never, never to forget me, nor what I had taught her, and maybe next summer she might be allowed to come back and see me. I gave her my copy of the "Changed Cross," writing both our names in it, then, as she clung to me with a child's ready tears, I produced a gift I had purposely kept to the very last, a tiny silver cross I had had made for her. She laughed with delight through her tears. "It looks almost like mine, the one I see in my head, you know," she said; "mine is silver, too, but it's some bigger." "Yes, poor child," I thought, "it is 'some bigger' than many a little trial I have sometimes called a cross."

I stood in my open door watching the little figure as it passed down the winding, box-bordered path. She held tightly in her hand the small box containing the silver cross. As she reached the end of the path she stopped to

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wipe the wet blue eyes. For a moment she laid down her little package on one of the old wooden posts at the entrance before passing through the gateway, and a quick thought came to me of the Cross-bearers' gate and the burden to be laid down there. But this time the cross was taken up again, and the little pilgrim went sadly on her way and out of my sight.

I received a few letters from her that spring, but they were not very satisfactory. It was a labor to write out in her stiff, round hand a few lines at a time, and I gained little knowledge of her real feelings in her new surroundings. I thought she seemed a little homesick, and that she missed me, her Sunday-school, and old companions, though she did not dwell upon this. She had begun to attend school, and wrote, "Teacher don't understand me yet, and the girls don't." Evidently fearing I would think her complaining she added in a postscript, "Teacher is pleasant to me, and I guess the girls are going to be by-and-by. I'm carrying it pretty well, I guess, dear Miss Annie."

She did not have to carry it much longer.

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In the summer, scarcely three months after she left me, a black-bordered letter from Ruth's mother brought me tidings of the child's death. Attacked by some childish ailment, she had not seemed seriously ill, but the heart had failed, and she passed suddenly quietly from earth. The mother, in her grief, told me very little of what I wanted most to know. She spoke of Ruth's affection for me, told me she had spoken of me in her illness, had asked to have the little gifts received from me at different times brought to her, and handled them with loving care. The day before she died she asked her sister to read "the fountain hymn," and later, "about the twelve gates." This last request was not understood at first, and Ruth explained by repeating part of the verse containing the allusion. But a few hours before she fell asleep she had taken the silver cross from among the other little gifts of mine, and placed it under her pillow. She passed away while sleeping, and her mother told me that her face wore "such a sweet smile." I could not help thinking of the smile the child had said she would wear while waiting at the gate, to show she

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was "making the best of it." How many long years have gone by since the child went home! Yet, as I write I can see her so plainly, as I saw her last, a little figure passing down the narrow path to the gateway, and on beyond my sight.

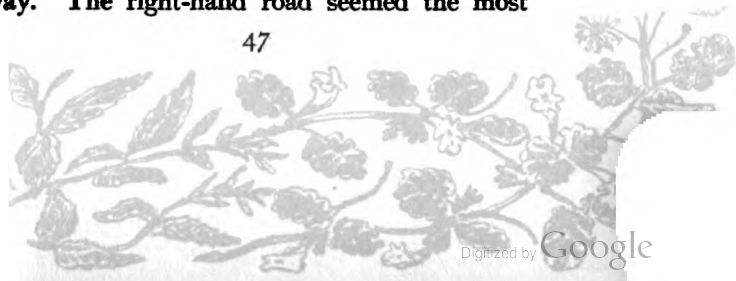
A SIMPLE CHILD TRAINER

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IT is quite thirty years since I saw the man.

We were taking one of our long, lazy drives through northern New England. We had left Felchville the day before, and driven down the valley along a quiet stream, catching fine glimpses of old Ascutney from time to time, through little Amsden, a tiny village lying in a sort of gorge, then down Black River, and across to Springfield and Charlestown. To-day we were going towards Acworth and Lempster, over a road which is just a succession of long, steep hills, with superb views from the top of each. It was June, and the fairest, brightest weather.

At length we came to a place where the road branched, one part turning sharply to the right, the other trending leftward. As we came to this fork in the road, we hesitated. There was no signboard, and we were not sure of our way. The right-hand road seemed the most



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traveled one, with many ruts and wheel-tracks. But far up the left road I could see smoke rising as from a chimney. So I decided to take that way, and ask further directions at the house there. As we went on, the road took a sudden turn, and we came upon a little group of children. Barefoot, sunburnt, tow-headed, ragged, three boys and one girl, ranging in age from about six to thirteen years. As we approached them, I saw that they were gathering bunches of the white, flat-topped clusters of elder blossoms from a tall bush by the wayside. I called a halt, meaning to inquire whither the road led. But first I asked:

“What kind of bush is that, children?”

The girl, a ragged, shock-headed child, stared at me, and said:

“What? this 'ere bush?”—pointing to the shrub from which they were gathering the blossoms.

“Yes; what do you call it?”

With one voice, but in varied tones, from squeaky to hoarse, the girl and boys called out:

“Sambucus.”

Picture my amazement. For “sambucus”

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is the botanical and scientific name of the shrub. How had these rough little young ones learned it? I would try again.

"Has it any other name?" I asked.

"Yes'm," began a freckled-faced little chap. And the others struck in at once, "His nickname's 'the elder.'"

"Nickname!" I cried. "What in the world do you mean?"

"Why, it's this way," said the girl who had first spoken. "He's Mr. Bucus, Sam Bucus, and he's sort o' white-headed and stiff-lookin', so folks calls him Sam Bucus, the elder."

I was delighted. Here were children after my own heart, knowing the real scientific names of things, and yet surrounding them with a friendly human interest. Who had been their teacher? I must look into the matter. But first I would ask more questions concerning the things about us. I saw a little plant from which the flowers had already fallen, leaving little green oblong bunches of seed-vessels.

"Have you any name for that?" I asked, pointing at it with my parasol.

"Why, o' course; we've got names for every-

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thing," answered one of the boys. "And that's Ann Emony, Mis' Emony's little girl."

Anemone! So it was. And these blessed young ones knew it even in fruit, when the delicate white blossoms had vanished. I saw that the girl was holding some bright object on the palm of her little brown hand. I stepped closer to see what it was,—for by this time we had all left the carriage, and were standing near the little group. In the child's hand lay a large yellow-and-black butterfly, with long, slender tails to his delicate wings.

"What is this?" I asked.

"That's Cap'n Turnus," said the girl. "He's head o' the hull comp'ny o' swaller-tails. He wears yellor an' black, ye see, 'cause he's cap'n; and there's two other fellers o' that comp'ny round here. They wear black, trimmed up with blue an' greenish an' so on. There's more o' the comp'ny somewheres, but not jest here."

I am devoted to natural history, and I could have hugged this ragged little collector of *Papilio turnus*. Seeing my interest in the insect, one of the boys drew near, and said:

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"There's real queer things come flyin' 'round at night. One of 'em's as big as a bat, brown, with big sort o' glass winders on her wings. She's Polly Phemus, Widder Phemus's daughter. Her folks 's in the silk business. Did ye ever see her?"

Indeed, I knew her well, our big American silkworm moth,—*Attacus polyphemus*.

"Who told you all these things?" I cried, full of wonder and delight. And in one voice they answered, "Pa."

I must see this man, and, telling the driver to come slowly on, the rest of us walked with the children to their home.

I wish I could give you any adequate idea of the man I met there. I made a few notes that evening after reaching Lempster, jotting down all I and my companions could recall of him and his story. But they seem so poor and imperfect! In person he was a tall, gaunt, raw-boned man of about fifty, his dark hair streaked with gray, his back rounded and bowed almost to deformity, and he was slightly lame. He was born, he told us, in Massachusetts, had attended the district school in

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his native village irregularly for several years, and had acquired there, or, perhaps, had inherited, a taste for books and reading; and he had always loved nature.

"I didn't like the way other folks' children was brought up," he said. "They was all learnt the same things,—a-b ab, e-b eb, and all that, with nothin' interestin' or practical about it. They never opened their eyes to the things all about 'em no more than three-day-old puppies or kittens. I didn't want my children to be that sort, and I kep' figurin' how I could help it, and make 'em somethin' different. I hit on it a little at a time, and carried it out the same way. I got some books, and first thing I studied 'em myself. Ye can't learn anybody anything till you know it yourself. I got a little book about plants, with the hard names and the easy ones too,—the 'booky names' and the 'talky names,' as my young ones call 'em. And I got another book about bugs and butterflies and sech.

"I like the easy names for things best myself, but, thinks I, as long as there's the other sort, and a good many folks use 'em, the children'd

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better know some of 'em. Now you can't make young folks learn a hard word without puttin' some sense into it for 'em. So I hit on that way o' sort o' making believe the plants and creaturs was folks and had folksy names. I'm free to confess that way helped me to rec'lect them jawbreakin' words better myself. I know it took me a long spell to get the book name for butterflies' feelers, or horns,—*antenna* it is,—till all of a sudden I rec'lected my great-uncle, old Jared Tenney. His wife was named Mary, and we called her Aunt Mary. But, I says to myself, we might jest's likely called her Aunt Tenney. I never forgot the book word for 'feelers' after that, and I learnt it that way to the children. 'When you want to rec'lect the booky name for a butterfly's feelers,' I says to 'em, 'think o' your pa's Aunt Tenney, who was a feelin' woman if ever there was one.' And they done it, and there they was. I didn't learn 'em too many of the hard, long, booky names,—jest enough so's they could get along with folks that used that kind.

"I learnt them the talky, folksy names, too. I rec'lect I had quite a story about a little girl

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named Parilla,—how sharp and peart and quick-speakin' she was, sayin' real spicy sort o' things to folks, till she began to go by the name of Sarsy Parilla. They took it right in, and learnt the plant real quick, with its round balls o' greenish flowers. And, after they'd once tasted the root, and see how sharp and spicy and tasty 'twas, they thought Sarsy Parilla was a real good name for it, and they never forgot it.

"Then I got a book about folks,—poets and writers and that sort,—and I read it and read it. I wanted my boys and girls to know a little about them things,—it's what they call litryture,—and I wanted to know a little myself. I did that a mite different. When I'd tell 'em about John Milton, and how he writ 'Paradise Lost,' I'd begin about a little boy jest as big as one of them,—'Lisha, mebbe,—and how his name was Johnny, and he was old Mis' Milton's boy. And I'd tell 'em how he used to like the story o' Adam and Eve and the Garden o' Eden, and then how he growed up and writ verses about 'em,—splendid verses, that everybody read and talked about. And

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then I'd let 'Lisha play for two or three days together that he was Johnny Milton, and Gid and Seth and Sarah 'Liza would call him that, and talk to him about Adam and Eve and the apple, and ask him if he didn't think he could make some verses about it; and he'd say he meant to when he growed up, and call 'em 'Paradise Lost,' and so on. End o' that time every one of them children knew so's they couldn't ever forget it who Milton was, and what he writ. They all took turns bein' great writers, and talkin' about their books.

"I rec'lect Sarah 'Liza was Mis' Hemans for a whole week,—wouldn't stop and turn back into her own self, 'cause she was so fond o' sayin' that about the boy's standin' on the burnin' deck, and t'other about the breakin' waves dash'd high. I'd have a sort o' review once in a while, and go through a lot o' questions: 'Who writ the Wav'ley novels?' 'Was there anything the matter with John Milton's eyesight?' 'Who writ the "Pilgrim's Progress"?' and so on. And they'd answer up as pat as could be. One time I had a real siege learnin' em who writ 'My country, 'tis o'

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thee.' 'Twas such a common name,—Smith,—that 'twas harder to rec'lect than the queer ones. So one night, as I was studyin' what to do about it, I thought of a way. Next day I made 'em sing that piece to 'Meriky,' only sayin' 'Smith' instead o' 'my' and 'I'

'Smith's country, 'tis o' thee,
Smith's land o' liberty,
Of thee Smith sings.
Land where Smith's fathers died,

and so on and so on. My! you couldn't whip 'em into forgettin that poet now."

So this original—his name was Gideon Reynolds—talked on to us delighted listeners. You must remember that this was before the days of kindergarten in America. Froebel was living then, but his ideas had not reached this country, and the old-fashioned system of training children still prevailed. I had dreamed often of something different, and it was refreshing and delightful to talk with this pioneer, who had thought out a theory for himself, and put it into practise. Finding that our horses could be taken care of for a noon

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rest, and a simple luncheon given us, we decided to spend the day with our new friends. I had never seen such children. As I walked with them or sat on the steps while they gathered around, I was astonished at their knowledge of all about them. They knew the flowers, the trees, the grasses, the birds, the butterflies, not always—not often, indeed—by the names given by scientists, but by some appellation which showed the object was familiar to them. And occasionally would come from their lips, with startling effect, some Latin or Greek name, picked up by their father from one of his books, and taught them by some odd system of mnemonics of his own.

I could find no fault with anything up to a certain point. What they were taught, they knew thoroughly and sensibly. I say, up to a certain point. It was when, of his own accord, he began to speak of their religious training, that I became doubtful and confused. This part was eccentric,—even amusingly so; yet it seemed to hold a hint, a mere suggestion, of some great truth we might all well learn. But perhaps I am mistaken. I am sure none of us

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would care to follow Gideon Reynolds's plan in all its details.

"You see," he said, "I never knew what d'nomination I belonged to myself. My mother died when I was a little chap. We lived in an out-o'-the-way place, miles off from any village big enough to have a meetin'-house, and so we didn't go. But ma learnt me every-thing that anybody could learn at meetin',—I'm certain sure o' that. As fur's I rec'lect, she never said anything about any partic'lar d'nomination. Mebbe she did and I've forgot. She didn't dwell on it, I'm sure, or I'd a rec'lected, for I remember all the other things she learnt me, and I will to my dyin' day. She was took away when I was about nine year old, and I was sent off to my great uncle in another place. He wasn't a perfessor himself, and he never told me—if he knew—what church my mother'd belonged to. So I never knew what I was myself. For I was ma's kind, whatever it was; that I was sure of. She was the right kind, I knew that, whatever the name o' the church was. I knew 'twas a church that held to God, and his bein' great and good and just,

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and to his Son, and his dyin' to save us. It believed in his risin' from the dead, and livin' always in a place where we could go if we believed on him and done our duty here below. For she'd learnt me all that.

"When I got a mite older, and wanted to know what I was and what church to jine, I begun to look into things. Now I s'posed I'd find out in a jiffy which d'nomination 'round here held ma's beliefs. But my! I found they all held 'em,—every single one. Congregationals, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopal, —they all believed the things ma'd learnt me. Sometimes they'd appear to hold 'em in kind o' different ways, but nothing to speak of. But I dassen't jine any one of 'em for fear 't wasn't ma's kind. I married a Free-Will Baptist. She was a good woman, if ever there was one.

"Seems's if she held to everything mother did, and she wanted me to jine her church. But I held off, waitin' to get more light about ma's d'nomination. My wife died when the children was all little scraps of young ones, the littlest only a few weeks old. Five of 'em

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there was,—one's dead now. When I was left to have the whole charge of 'em, souls and bodies, I knew I'd got to fix on a church. I figured and figured, and bimeby I come to this. I'd looked into the matter; there was five orthodox churches I'd 'tended and studied about, and I was certain sure each one was good enough, and ma'd have been satisfied with any one of 'em. I'd jest make each one o' my five young ones a different d'nomination! So they'd all be safe anyway, and o' course, one of the lot would be mother's sort. I think that was pretty smart,—don't you? But then come another difficulty. Which should be which? They wasn't big enough to decide themselves, and I didn't exactly like to take such a awful responsibility myself.

“Then I hit on a plan. I writ the words Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, and Episcopal, each word on a different little card, and I made the cards different colors. I laid 'em all out on the table, and let the young ones choose, and when they'd done it, I brought up each child accordin' to what they'd picked out. I'm doin' it still. Gid—

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he's named for me—is a Baptist. He goes to Elder Smith's meetin' Sundays. I've got Baptist books for him, and done everything I could in that line. I'll have him immersed when he feels he's fit for it. Sarah 'Liza, she's a Congregational,—Congo, they call it for short 'round here,—and she 'tends Mr. Winter's church. There's only them two d'nominations right 'round here. But there's a Methodist church about ten mile away, and 'Lisha he's been over there two or three times a year. And there's a good old Methodist woman lives half a mile off, and she's learnin' 'Lisha all that's necessary. And he's got a Life of John Wesley and a Hist'ry of Methodism, and he's a real strong Methodist for his age,—goin' on ten.

“There ain't any Presbyterian meetin' in this section, so Tommie has to depend on books mostly,—the Westminster Shorter, and sech; but he's young yet, scursely six, so there ain't any hurry. And Sethy—Sethy's dead. He was an Episcopal,—picked out that card, a red one. There wasn't any church o' that sort anywheres 'round, and I'd been some

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troubled about givin' him Episcopal priv'leges. I'd got him a prayer-book, a little one with a green cover, and I'd learnt him some o' the little prayers out of it, but—well he's dead and—safe. He's got his grandma up there—and a better Teacher than her too—to learn him things and I ain't worryin' bout Sethy's d'nomination. I tell ye, I don't believe they make much o' sech things up there. If he tells mother how I brought him up and it ain't jest her old way, why she won't let on to him, more'n likely she's forgot herself what her d'nomination was when she was down here."

A SIMPLE PENTECOST

A SIMPLE PENTECOST

"DOUBT the miracles!" cried Granny Peckett as we were talking together of a certain sceptical character in the neighborhood and what he had said. "Can't understand them! Could believe the rest of the Bible, but can't swallow them! That's dreadful queer to me; ain't it to you? Miracles is just the easiest part of Scriptures to understand, seems to me. We can sense them, for we've all seen them; they're happening most every day, and they're the most natural things on the whole earth. Of course there are some parts of the Bible a mite difficult; and I, for one, don't pretend to understand them. I guess it wasn't meant that it should enter into the heart of man to conceive such wonderful things. But miracles! I've seen so many myself.

"Now, there was the day of Pentecost told about in Acts, a wonderful story and terrible hard for some folks to take in. That is, unless

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they've seen such a day themselves. And I have. Course I don't mean that I lived in those times and was there in those countries when Paul and Peter and all them were alive and round. That would make me more'n a thousand year old, wouldn't it? But I tell ye I saw one day of Pentecost, and it took place not far from this very spot, for 'twas in Sugar Hill village.

"It was just after Elder Welcome died. He had been a hard, strict, ha'sh man, though real good. But he mellered in his last years, and was a sight softer and kinder, made more allowances for folks, though just exactly as true to the right as ever. Elder Meech came after him, and was there at the time I'm talking about. He studied under Elder Welcome before the melling happened; and he'd caught all the hard, strict part from him with nothing to soften it up with. Well, you know that won't do. There must be hard and soft both in preaching religion as well as living it. It's just as it is with rye 'n' Injun bread; all hard crust won't do, nor all soft inside won't do. Some folks need something hard and

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tough to bite on, but there's other teeth can't stand the crusty part. There's little children and sick, weak folks that need the softest inside of the loaf; and they ought to have it—for a spell, anyways. I'm not one, either, to hold to the sort of religion that's all soft and mushy; that's nigh about as bad as the other. There's strait and narrow paths to be walked in, and strict laws to be obeyed, and hard-to-understand doctrines to accept and believe in, and punishments to be held up before the stubborn.

“But it hadn't ought to be all that kind; there's two sides, you know.

“But it was all hard, ha'sh, straight up and down, and no allowances, with Elder Meech. Under him the Sugar Hill church sort of run down. Folks was scared off or riled up by his way of preaching and acting till sometimes, come Sunday, there wasn't half a dozen people in the meeting-house. The Elder was so set about the doctrines, and all that, that he was always thinking the other ministers round there, all over Grafton County and the whole State of New Hampshire, dreadful lax. He preached about the other ministers, wrote about them,

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and talked about them and to them till they was all worked up, mad at him and down on each other, blaming their own members and other congregations, argufying, fighting, fault-finding—deary me, 'twas an awful time! It seemed to get into families, too, and the nighest relations quarreled about what they believed or didn't believe, and what their own fav'rite minister held or didn't hold. Seemed as if peace on earth and good will to men had gone forever.

“It was a dreadful trial to all good folks. And one day, or night, rather, when Jane Bingham and me was watching with Mary Peabody's little girl that had the canker rash, we got talking over the state of things and what could be done about it. After discussing and argufying the best part of an hour, proposing ways and then seeing they wouldn't work for one reason or another, we ended up where we ought to begun. Nobody could do anything to help but God himself. And to get him to take hold of the business and carry it through, we must pray, and pray in earnest, and keep praying till we'd got what we wanted.

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"Jane says, 'I know that's the right thing to do, and I've got faith to think it will work; but,' she put in a minute after, sort of sorrowful, 'I don't believe 'twill do any good.'

"'But that isn't faith, Jane Bingham,' I says.

"Well, we agreed to try it, anyhow, and we knelt right down there by little Malviny's bed, and prayed. Next day we spoke to a few others of the right sort, all women as I recollect now, and they all fell in with it. And we prayed. Sometimes 'twas each for herself in her closet with the door shut; sometimes two or three gathered together in his name; but always, as far as I know, we prayed hard and prayed trusting. We hadn't noticed any change for the better, but somehow were full of hope and faith, when one morning—'twas in July, I guess, for I was making blueberry shortcake for dinner, and I know the berries were fresh, not put-up ones—Jane Bingham came running into my kitchen.

"'Oh, Sabry,' she says, all out of breath, 'it's no good; the fat's in the fire now, and our prayers are all wasted.'

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“‘Prayers ain’t ever wasted,’ I do hurry and tell me what it’s all a’

“So she told me as soon as breath. Seems Elder Bacon over field had been preaching heresy, was great talk about it. Some folks thought it wasn’t exactly heresy, or not the worst kind, and some held it was; some stood up for him and some didn’t; and now there was talk of trying him, and there was to be a meeting about it. I forget just what kind it was, whether they called it a conference or a council or a court or what, and I don’t know whether it was a State thing or a county one. Anyway, it was to be in Sugar Hill and in our meeting-house, where Elder Meech preached.

“‘And you know,’ says Jane, most crying, ‘you know how the Elder loves a fight. His favorite text is that about not coming to bring peace but a sword, and he’s dreadful fond of all the “woe-unto-you” passages. Just as our folks needs the other sort, the peace-making, loving, blest-be-the-tie-that-binds-our-hearts-in-Christian-love kind, he’ll let the brethren pitch into each other and into every-

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body else, and even sick 'em on like dogs a-fighting. Just as we was praying so hard, too, and felt so full of hope and faith. Oh, Sabry, Sabry, what's the use? what's the use?" and she clean broke down.

"I felt dreadful, too, but I tried to hold on to the promises. After a spell we both saw that, even if there didn't seem any great chance of it's coming out right, we mustn't give up, but keep on praying as if we did believe there was some hope yet. We went round and saw the rest of our band. They were all very low in their minds, knowing too well the state of things that was likely to follow the trial of Brother Bacon. But one and each promised to keep on praying with all her might and main, and, what's more and harder, to try to believe her prayers were going to be answered some-ways, somehow.

"Well, the day came round, as all days do, if you wait patient or don't wait patient. There'd been a three days' easterly storm with pouring rain, and the roads were just deep mud and big puddles; such dreadful going! The folks in buck-boards and other kinds of

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wagons were shook up and jolted and joggled, spattered all over with mud and dirt. Them on foot were a sight, their shoes all a muss of dirt, their trousers and skirts and stockings soppo wet. It wasn't just the best preparation for a discussion. There were cross faces, fretty voices, scowling foreheads enough, I tell you; and our faith, a poor sort, I'm afraid, grew weaker fast.

"Elder Meech had only a short walk from his house to the church; but somehow he'd contrived to step into a puddle with one foot, and that was dripping wet way above his ankle, and him subject to quinsy sore throat, too, if he got too damp.

"Parson Goodenow from Lisbon had come in a buggy with his wife and Ardelle, and he'd drove right into a deep rut full of water, and Mis' Goodenow's best dress was splashed with mud and wet, as it hung out at the side, they being a little crowded. Ardelle had leaned over to see what the matter was, and dropped her brand-new hat right into the mud, so that the parson had to climb out and pick it up, the dirty water running down all over

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his clean white cuffs. I guess he was pretty sure that minute that Brother Bacon was to blame for all of that mess, and that he'd help make him or some one else suffer for it.

"Mr. Whitman from Littleton had been up all night with a toothache. His cheek was awful swelled and his face tied up in a red silk handkerchief.

"Dr. Martin from Bethlehem had jammed his thumb in a door just before he started, and you know that's dreadful trying. Deary me, everything seemed to be against us, and working against peace and good will. But seems there was something or somebody working the other way, and working to some purpose.

"Folks tell me that I don't recollect right, or else this wasn't a regular trial for heresy; else they wouldn't have let outsiders, women folks and so on, into the meeting. Well, I told you I couldn't remember all the particulars; but one thing I know certain sure, I was there, and so was Jane Bingham. But I own up again I haven't the least idea what the particular heresy or wrong holding was they conceited Elder Bacon was given to. Whether he had

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preached too much or too little about election and predestination, or again if he hadn't dwelt enough on covenanted mercies, or had run them into the ground; whether he had seemed to go against the perseverance of the saints, or went too strong for it; if there was too much original sin and Adam's fall in his discourses, or not nigh enough, I don't know. What came afterwards on that wonderful day drove all those little matters clean out of my head.

"But I know there was a dreadful time over it all, first off. I can see it just as plain as print as I think back. One minister after another jumping up out of his turn, and holler-ing out things against the others, and refusing to sit down when the man in charge—our Elder Meech had the say—told him to. Then somebody saying awful things about poor Brother Bacon, and two or three others yelling out all at once that it wasn't true. So on and on till it was more like a caucus or a town-meeting than a gathering together of the fol-lowers of our Lord. Jane Bingham and me, we sat in one of the hind pews, our eyes wet up, and the last drops of faith in our prayers

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for peace and good will dribbled away as we looked on.

"Elder Meech was standing up there tall and lean, with a scowling, angry face, one leg and foot all sopping wet where he'd stepped into the puddle, and he thinking inside all the time, I knew well, of the quinsy that was coming from it; Mr. Whitman with one cheek all puffed out, his eyes red from laying awake the night before and his voice thick and swelly from the sore and ache, called his brother ministers all the names he really meant to apply to that bad back tooth; Dr. Martin kept waving his hands about, his poor jammed thumb tied up with a white rag, all sore and hot and beating, as you could tell by the way he talked. Parson Goodenow was holding up his hands in wonder at everybody else's wickedness, his muddy cuffs showing plain and he knowing it. Oh, it was like a dog-fight or a school-meeting more than anything else.

"Jane Bingham and me—likely as not all the rest of our prayer circle was there too, but somehow I just seem to remember her and me who'd worked and talked and prayed over

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this together so long and steady—Jane and me, we gave right up for good an' all. 'O we of little faith,' I says to myself afterwards, for not believing, when a real day of Pentecost was at hand!

"Now the next part, the miracle, the great and wonderful happening, I can't tell you about as I ought to. Paul is the only man that could ever do it justice. So I somehow find myself falling into the Bible words when I try to tell the story. For it was exactly like that first Pentecost in Bible times, every mite as wonderful, and sometimes I think more so. For some ways I can't feel as if Jerusalem and the hundred and twenty followers of the Lord at that time was so quarrelsome and broke up into different opinions and holdings as Sugar Hill believers. But to-day they were agreed on one thing, at any rate, for they were all with one accord in one place; and Jane and me, we were there. The talk was at the loudest, four or five speaking all at once, every single one trying to drown the others' voices, Elder Meech pounding with his fist on the big leather-covered Bible front of him so that you could

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hear each knock, when a sudden despr'ite feeling come over me. Jane, she told me afterwards, had it, too; and I don't doubt the rest of the troubled souls who'd been praying so hard for peace and love felt the same. Then I—and I guess the others about the same minute—raised up our hearts, and just begged for help. I says to myself, but out loud—for you could say anything in that noise: 'O Lord, dear Lord, they know not what they do. Forgive them; and, if you can, and I most know—yes, I do know—you can, just soften their hearts this very instant; for I can't stand it one minute longer—nor Jane Bingham, neither.'

"While I was saying the words, as I got out the last one, a sudden feeling of belief, faith, perfect sureness that God heard and would help, come over me. 'Twas like the rushing of a great wind coming up from the mountains and sweeping down into the valley from old Lafayette and Kinsman, sweeping all the fog and clouds before it, that sure, mighty faith. 'Twasn't me alone felt it; I saw that as I opened my eyes, shut up while I was praying, and looked round.

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“Folks said different things afterwards about what brought about that change. One thought that Parson Goodenow, just as he was saying a bad, bitter thing about a brother minister caught sight of his wife’s face,—she was a good, praying woman,—and saw the tears running down her cheeks, such thin, hollow ones since her great loss and sorrow, and that made him stop and think. Another held that Dr. Martin heard little Ephraim Wattles saying over his Sabbath-school lesson to himself; it happened to be that week,—if anything only *happens* in this world, —‘Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.’ But two or three conceited that Elder Meech himself, turning to Brother Bacon to thunder out a woe at him, see through the window his own house and the side door where his little sickly lame girl, Roxanny, used to sit and watch for Mr. Bacon. He was settled at North Lisbon then, and was dreadful good to the poor little cripple.

“But I always hold, and so does Jane Bingham, that it was a sound from heaven that did it all. ’T any rate, seems ’s if something wonderful and heavenly rushed in and

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filled all the house where we were sitting. And, looking round, I see every face, so hateful and unchristian a little spell back, lighted up now with a strange new light. 'Twas just as though something or somebody had kindled a flame of sacred love in those cold hearts of theirs, as the hymn says. And this flame appeared unto us most like a tongue of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, as we see when they begun to speak again. For oh, it was such a different language as the Spirit give them utterance!

"I disremember just who begun it, but seems's if the first voice I took notice of was our Elder's. He'd begun a woe on Mr. Bacon, as I said before, but now all of a sudden he stopped short; that singular light shone on his face; and he was dreadful still a minute. Then he spoke again, but in such a different tongue you wouldn't think it was the same language. His voice was soft and kind, shaking a mite, and he said: 'But I know—we all know, Brother Bacon—that you love our Master. Your whole life shows that.'

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"And Elder Bacon, who'd had a hard, obstinate kind of look on his face a spell back while the others were pitching into him—his features sort of broke up; the hardness melted as if by fire and warmth; I see his eyes were all wet, and he reached out his hand. It didn't have room to go half-way, for Elder Meech's had got the start of his. And, as they clasped hands, one after another of the brethren begun to speak in that strange new tongue, unknown so long in Sugar Hill village. Brother Bacon tried to say something about his being young and ignorant, and how he hoped the older and wiser brethren would show him his mistakes and help him. Mr. Whitman's face shone so with love and charity that everybody forgot his toothache and swelled cheek, and Dr. Martin's thumb must have got most well, you'd have thought when you saw him shaking hands with all the others and patting the accused on the shoulder as if he was his own son. And dear, good old Parson Goodenow forgot his muddy cuffs, I guess,—'t any rate, the rest of us did, when he held up his arms at the very close of the meeting, and blessed us all, every

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single one, with the peace of God that passeth all understanding, his loving eyes all wet, but that wonderful flame shining on the tears till they were most like rainbows.

"There were devout folks there from different places and of different ways of thinking. Some came from Vermont, some from way down East; two or three was from Canady; and one family was Germans, who had come to work in the glove factory at Littleton. They held different kinds of beliefs, too, some of them belonging to Baptist families, some to Methodists, several raised by Presbyterian parents, and two or three having Episcopal bringing-up. But in this meeting—for it grew into a general meeting, a love-feast you might call it—they all spoke one language, the Lord's own. We didn't stop just then and there to notice that; but, as we came away, some to climb into buckboards or wagons for long rides over the heavy roads, some to splosh through the muddy Sugar Hill street on foot, you could hear folks one after another talking of how strange it all was. And they were amazed and marveled, saying, says they: 'Ain't all of those that

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talked Congregationals and Grafton County men? How does it come about, then, that all of us, every single one, appeared to hear the kind of talk he was raised on?"

"‘That’s so,’ says old Jacob Schiller they used to call ‘Dutch Jake’ round there; ‘while they was talking, seemed as if I was listening to good Pastor Werther in the little Lutheran church far away across the sea, and I was a little lad again by the dear mother’s side.’

"But Leonard Wheeler called it all good, sound Free-Will Baptist talk such as he was brought up under in Dorset among the Green Mountains. Pete Cartaret, who was from Canady and talked broken kind of foreign talk, he swore—he hadn’t an idee it was swearing—that it was the first Yankee preaching he could ever *compron*, as he called it. He said it made him think of the church where he went with his little brothers, three pretty boys, dead and gone now, and of the way old Father Clare with the face of a saint talked to his people.

"And so it was, New Hampshire folks, Green Mountain people, Dutchmen and Irish, French and Yankees, dwellers in Littleton and

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Easton, strangers and summer boarders, city folks from far-off places, they all did hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

“Don’t you think that was a real day of Pentecost, if nothing but a Sugar Hill one? And a miracle, too? I hold it was. I’ve often and often told folks the story, and I guess that’s how you came to hear, as you said, that I pretend to recollect the miracles and to have been there in the midst and ’mongst of them.

“Well, I thank God I was in one, anyway—and that Jane Bingham was, too. After that, and because of it, of course, came the greatest awakening and pouring out of the Spirit of God through all that country that the oldest inhabitant of Grafton County could call to mind. ’Twasn’t a noisy, excited, short-lived revival, but a quiet, deep, real change and altering of lives and hearts.

“But sometimes I can’t help wishing—for it’s natural to us poor humans to be selfish and jealous—that I and the rest of us praying women could have had just the least mite to do with bringing about that blessed thing. If we’d only kept up a little longer, if our poor,

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weak faith hadn't give out and failed just before the end! Oh, what a comfort, as I grow old and have so little harvest to carry home to the Master, what a comfort and joy 'twould be to think that I'd had the very littlest speck of a part in helping along that thing! But God knew best, and maybe he meant I should realize how weak and unbelieving I really was—and that Jane Bingham should, too."

A SIMPLE DREAMER

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WE were driving through the Green Mountain country of Vermont in early June. Our road lay through woods, and was wild and beautiful. The leafage was yet young, and of that tender green never seen later in the season. The early flowers, fragile and lovely, peeped out half shyly, half surprised at finding their vague winter dreams of a glad waking all realized. Violets,—blue, yellow, and white,—straw lilies with drooping bells of amber, bear plum with blossoms of pale yellow, tiarella with white feathery flowers, creamy bunchberry, dwarf Solomon's seal, white and sweet, clustered along our way. Song sparrows, vireos, thrushes, warblers, made music for us, and the world seemed very beautiful and glad. The road sloped gently upward for some half a mile, and then we entered a sort of ravine. On each side were mountains, and down below us, some fifty feet or more, lay a clear blue lake,

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its waters shining in the sunlight. My companions were born anglers, and the sight was a tempting one. The blue waters seemed waiting for the touch of a fly cast lightly upon their surface, and must not wait in vain. The ever-ready rods were taken from the wagon, and the fishermen strolled down the bank to the water. I, too, left the wagon to wander among the trees. As I turned from the road into the forest, on the side nearest the lake, I started at sight of a figure close by. A man stood motionless, looking down toward the clear blue waters. His back was toward me, and I could not see his face, but his whole appearance betokened great poverty. I have never seen clothing so ragged as that he wore; for through the holes his skin gleamed out white in places.

Instinctively, I looked back toward the wagon, which was standing at the top of the bank a little farther on. The driver caught my eye, and made a warning gesture, motioning significantly toward the seeming tramp. I hesitated, but at that instant the man turned his head, and I saw his face.

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I cannot tell you how it affected me, even in that first moment. It was a wonderful face, a beautiful one, with noble features of great regularity, and clear, deep, tender eyes. His hair was of dark chestnut brown, worn somewhat long and wavy. I can give no true idea of the beauty and meaning of that face as it rose above those tattered garments. There was a look of deep sadness in the eyes as they met mine, and the figure, as it stood there in the shadow, had such a lonely look that I felt I must speak to him at once.

"How beautiful it is here!" I said. His voice surprised me with its low, clear, refined accents, as he replied:

"Yes, the world is very beautiful, and so it was eighteen hundred years ago."

"You mean when Christ was here," I said.

"Yes, when he was here first."

"And you are one of those who believe he will soon come again?"

He smiled a grave, mysterious smile.

"He has been here again often, long ago and lately, and," after a slight pause, "he is here now."

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"In this world?" I said quickly. "But where?"

"They do not know him, they never know him," he said sadly, with such a lonesome pathos in his voice. "He is alone in the midst of so many, all alone even when he is talking with them, for they do not recognize him."

He lifted the old torn felt hat from his head, and passed his hand across his forehead wearily. It was a broad white brow; the hair was divided in the center, and fell in loose waves down each side. Where had I seen a picture like that face? He sat down on the grassy bank under the trees, and I seated myself a little lower down, quite near, and we talked. I had gathered some of the tiny June blossoms, and he spoke quietly of their beauty. A sparrow fluttered to the ground near us, and he smiled gently as he looked at it. He lifted his eyes toward the hills, and often turned them on the quiet lake. But there was always a lonely look on his face, and a sad tone in his voice. And he spoke of the pain and sin on the earth.

"They sin and they suffer always, always, and I cannot help them."

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Perhaps it had been gradually dawning upon my mind,—it is so hard to remember how a thought comes to one,—but it seems now as if it sprang out suddenly just then, the meaning of his words. Yes, his mind was astray, and, though he never said in so many sentences that he was the One who wandered here long, long ago, unknown and lonely to the end, I could not doubt what his dream was. I think the words which convinced me of it were those he used when speaking of his wish to help the sinning and suffering. “How many times I would have done it!” he said sorrowfully; “but they would not let me.” And a quick, sudden memory came to me of words like those: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets.”

“Do you live near here?” I asked.

“I have no home here,” he said gently. “My mother lives in the village over yonder, but I do not live anywhere.”

I heard voices; the anglers were coming up the bank. The man saw them, with their rods and lines, and smiled gravely.

“Do you like fishing?” I asked.

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"I love fishermen," he said thoughtfully, and with a far-away, remembering look in his eyes. "Some of my best friends were fishermen in the old days, when I was here before."

As my companions came nearer, the stranger turned away, walking slowly and wearily back to the road, and on in the direction from which we had come that morning. I hastened after him, and with much hesitation, held out some money.

"Could you use this?" I asked him humbly.

He looked into my face with a strange, wistful, questioning look, almost a protest, certainly an appeal. Did I too fail to know him, as had the others, it seemed to ask. Must he go on to the end unrecognized, lonely? Tears blinded my eyes as he said softly: "I do not need it, but I am glad it was in your heart to offer it, so glad for you."

My companions looked inquiringly at me as I rejoined them, my eyes wet with tears of which I was not ashamed, while they saw the ragged stranger passing down the road. I watched him, a lonesome figure, till he passed into the shadows among the trees, and I saw him no

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more. Then, as we drove through the sunshine and soft warmth of that June day, I told, or tried to tell, what I had heard and seen. And one of my friends, as he listened, began to repeat the words of an old hymn, sacred because the lips from which he had heard it long were silent to him now.

"A poor wayfaring man of grief
Hath often passed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never say him nay.

"I had no power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came;
But there was something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why."

All day the strong impression was with me. As we drove along the quiet Vermont roads, the grass of the fields so clothed in summer beauty, the birds of the air fed without their own sowing or reaping, the blossoms arrayed in more than kingly glory, yet with no weary toil or spinning, the clear streams, the peaceful hills, had a new beauty, somewhat sad, but very full of promise. No sermon, no chant, no

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learned theological treatise, nay, not even the reading of the gospel story itself, grown familiar line upon line as heard and read from childhood, had ever made that lonely life of the Stranger, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, such a real thing to me; for I had seen him, I mean this with all reverence; as St. Paul says, "I speak as a man."

At the little village farther on, we stopped to make inquiries about the wanderer. We gained little satisfaction. According to those we questioned, he was "kind of crazy; 'tany rate a little off." They "guessed he wouldn't do no harm, though it scaret some folks to hear him talkin' about blood, and how it had got to be spilt; but they calc'lated he didn't mean nothin'." As far as we could see, no one there had grasped any hidden meaning in that life, nor had the man himself, apparently, put into definite words his dream of what he was. So they did not understand, but, as the good old woman to whom I told the story next day said, as she wiped her eyes: "Some One understands, and I can't help thinking he must feel a real drawin' to the poor man that goes about in

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that lonesome way, so dreadful like the way
he went himself. And he'll make it all up to
him some time. And that man himself won't
be sorry nor disappointed when he sees the
real One and finds out his mistake, 'Like a
dream when one awaketh,' the Bible says,
and he'll be satisfied when he awakes with
His likeness."

A SIMPLE FAITH

A SIMPLE FAITH

NOT long ago, there passed away from this earthly life a dear woman whose childlike faith taught me many lessons. Her skin was dark, but I never knew a whiter soul. She had been born a slave, but God's boundless freedom was hers even in the days of bondage. She was my servant, but she was also my friend, and often, very often, my teacher. I know I cannot tell the story of her simple faith and the beauty of her religious life as it should be told; I cannot make you understand it. I never knew such firm, unshaken trust in God, such a positive literal belief in the Bible and every word it holds, such entire, utter freedom from the doubts which at times assail most of us. I do not think she had ever even heard that there were those who doubted the existence of a God. I well remember overhearing her exclamation, given to a young girl who was reading aloud to her, of the verse, "The fool

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hath said in his heart, There is no God.”
“Co’s’e it don’t mean there ever was anybody that said that. Thank the Lord, it’s laid out so plain and clear folks can’t help seein’ it’s so. But it means that, if there ever should be anybody that said it, even in his own inside heart, he’d be a fool,—and he would, sure.”

Drusy was quite without what is generally called education. She could not read or write. But she knew her Bible well, though not in just the way its commentators know it. She had never heard of the higher criticism, or revised versions, even of different editions or translations of the Scriptures. Yet very often her criticism seemed higher than that of most, and her version of the Book she loved an authorized one, having supreme authority and needing little revision. Yet her comments often provoked a smile, and her marginal notes and annotations, if I may call them so, were original, and sometimes amusing. She brought her religion, not only into every-day life, but into her every-hour—nay, every-minute—existence. Sometimes her frequent, familiar references to the Deity would startle one. But it

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was only for a moment. You could not help recognizing the real, deep reverence underlying all, nor could you fail to see that her allusions were only familiar in the best sense of the term, when it expresses closeness of relation, a beloved accustomedness.

"Do you think it is going to rain, Drusy?" I would ask sometimes, when dry, fair weather seemed desirable in my eyes.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know what He's goin' to do about weather this time. Mebbe he'll see there's some wet needed somewhere's about, and turn on the rain; mebbe he'll keep it dry. You never can tell what he'll do,—can ye?" And she would smile an almost indulgent smile, but one full of loving trust. It would be all right as long as he managed affairs, her look said, and she was not anxious.

"There, now," she exclaimed once, after an exciting presidential election, "to think we was wrong, after all! You know we thought that other gen'leman was the one that had ought to get the place; we held he was the best one for it. But 'pears we got it wrong, and this other gen'leman was the one that'd

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ought to have it, 'cordin' to the Lord. I'm real glad there's somebody that knows just what's best, and that he's got the say, for folks is so ign'rant, and politics is dreadful hard."

She had the vivid imagination common to her race, a love of the picturesque, dramatic, and marvelous. So to her the Book of Revelation was perhaps the most delightful part of the Bible, and its wildest, most incomprehensible imagery gave her intense pleasure. How many, many times has a conversation like this taken place!

"Drusy, would you like to hear a chapter from the Bible?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am! if you please."

Drusy's manner was always most courteous and respectful. She had belonged to a fine old family of Virginia, and was well trained from childhood.

"And what shall I read?"

"Anything that suits you, ma'am; it's all good."

"But I would rather have you choose, Drusy."

"Well, ma'am, if it's really just the same to

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you, I do feel to-day like hearing a little Revelations."

This did not mean those peaceful passages which speak of the place where there is no night, where tears are wiped away, where the quiet river glides along between tree-shaded banks. It was the strange, mysterious, figurative part of the Apocalypse she longed for, that which tells of the angel with the key and the great chain, who laid hold of the dragon, "that old serpent," and bound him, and set a seal upon him for a thousand years; of the four beasts full of eyes before and behind; of the white horse, the black horse, and the "horse that was red." She wanted to hear of the seven angels and their seven trumpets, and the terrible things that followed the sounding of each one; of the locusts whose shapes were like unto horses prepared unto battle; of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and "upon his heads the name of blasphemy." What meaning did she find in this wonderful mystery? I do not know.

But that she found something which meant to her much that was beautiful as well as awe-

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inspiring, comforting as well as terrible, you would not have doubted if you had watched her dark, expressive face as she listened. Her eyes shone, her lips moved as if she were repeating to herself the words she heard, she rocked gently back and forth, her hands clasped tightly together, moved, in a sort of regular, measured way, slowly up and down, as she bent forward, eager to catch every word. Then at the utterance of some strange—to me almost meaningless—word, the tense attitude would relax, the bright eyes soften, become moist, and the features quiver with some tender emotion I could not comprehend. I remember well her asking me one day to read “that wormwood chapter.” This proved to be the eighth chapter of Revelation, where we are told of a great star burning as a lamp, and how it fell from heaven upon the rivers and fountains. The name of that star was Wormwood, and, when it fell, a third part of the waters became wormwood, and men died of those waters because of the bitterness. As I ended, Drusy exclaimed:

“Oh! ain’t that just beautiful? I tell ye,

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the whole Bible's good, and I set store by every single word; but some of it's sort of hard to follow when you hear it read out. But with Revelation it's all so plain and straight-out, and easy and nach'l. When you read that part just now, I could see it all as plain as anything. That great big shinin' wormwood star up in the sky, and then its beginnin' to fall and fall. I see it comin' down, down, down, and then drop into the water, and I could 'most taste the bitter of that water, and see the folks drinkin' it and then dyin'. It's all so nach'l,—now ain't it?"

It was not to me, I confess, though I had read the explanatory notes of many commentators. But Drusy understood it. Who had helped her?

A few years ago we were told that there was to be an eclipse of the moon visible in the eastern United States. As it was to occur late in the night, I did not speak of it to Drusy, not supposing that she would take any particular interest in the phenomenon, or care to keep awake till it could be seen. I stole downstairs from my room, in the silent hours, to watch

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for the spectacle. When all was over, and I was about to re-enter the house quietly, I suddenly saw that the kitchen windows were brightly lighted. Fearing that some one was ill, I went quickly into the room. There sat Drusy alone and quiet. This was strange enough at that hour of the night, but her appearance was even more surprising, for she was dressed in her best black Sunday gown, with its snowy folds of muslin at her throat. At my sudden entrance and exclamation of surprise she looked up. There was a touch of wounded pride in her voice as she said, "You didn't tell me a word about it, ma'am."

"About what?" I asked, much puzzled.

"The show," she replied,—“the show in the sky. I heard Benjamin read about it in the paper,—how there was to be some kind of a show up there, and I knew God had got it up for folks to look at. He's always doin' such things for us, you know. Now I've got a bad cold and a misery in my head, and I don't dare to go out in the night air. Of course, he understands about that, and wouldn't expect it. But," she added gravely and with much

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dignity, "he'd have a right to feel hurt if I didn't take no notice at all, but just went to bed, and slept through the whole entertainment. So I got ready, and I've been sittin' here ever since it opened. Is it out now, ma'am?"

Do you smile at such simplicity? Well, I smiled too at the time, but as I remember the scene now it is not all amusement that I feel. There are so many wonderful "shows" provided for us of which we take no notice, and through which we seem to sleep on as though no strange thing had happened.

Drusy was a Methodist; she loved her own church, but she loved all that was good and true, and was very tolerant and liberal in her attitude toward other denominations than her own. She grew impatient—in her mild way—when she spoke of the excited discussions which arose at times among her colored acquaintances of differing creeds.

"Makes me 'most sick to hear them," she would say, "talkin' about what they don't understand theyselves,—for some of them's mighty ign'rant. But they go on talkin' louder and louder, the Baptists callin' out 'Buried



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with Him in baptism,' 'Buried in baptism,' and them not knowin' what it means; and the 'Piscopals braggin' about their prayer-books with the printed prayers made so many hundred years ago; and the Methodists talkin' at the top of their voices about 'John Westerly,' 'John Westerly,' makes me 'most sick."

"And who was John Westerly?" I once ventured to ask.

The dear old woman hesitated, looking a little confused, then said, "Why, I don't know as much about him as I'd ought to, but I guess he was somebody that went roamin' through the wilderness and preachin'. They say he started the Methodists, but I don't just know, don't seem to make much difference to me." I think the good woman had probably confused John Wesley with John the Baptist, though I cannot tell why.

One day, when we were together in the kitchen, we were talking of favorite texts and hymns. At last she said, "I think about the most beautiful word in the whole Bible is bassdum." The word seemed such a strange one that I thought I had misunderstood her,

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and asked her to repeat it. She spoke it again with much feeling and earnestness, "Bassdum." I was much puzzled, and Drusy was quick to see it. "Maybe I don't speak it right," she said, "but that's the way it sounds to me, and the way I think of it. You know they call the dear Lord Jesus that; Elder Weeks explained it to me one time. He said it was when somebody couldn't go to do something himself, something very partic'lar or very kind, and sometimes very hard. Then he'd send somebody he could trust to do it for him, just as if he did it hisself. And that one he sends is called a bassdum. Just as if you had something very partic'lar to be done, ma'am, that would help somebody in trouble,—a kind thing, but one that was hard, real hard, to do right,—and you should think I could be trusted to do it for you,—there bein' some reason you couldn't do it yourself, and you let me try, why, then," she said with earnest pride, "I'd be a bassdum."

I knew now what she meant; the word was "ambassador." She went on to tell why she loved it, and, as well as I could comprehend,

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this was because of several reasons. The chief one was that our Lord himself became one, sent by his Father on that great, that marvelous, most blessed errand. I do not find that the word is used in this connection in the Scriptures, but Drusy thought it was. And then the term appealed to that loyalty, so conspicuous and inherent a trait of the negro's character. To be so trusted by one's master or mistress, one's employer or friend, that one could be sent to do some great thing with the confident belief, the certainty, that it would be done "just as if he'd done it hisself," that was something to live for, even to die for. And so dear, faithful, loyal Drusy loved the word.

As I said before, she was born a slave, but she had no bitter or sad memories of her bondage. She had belonged to two maiden ladies in Virginia, and her recollections of them and their training were grateful and pleasant. "They were real Christians," she used to say very often, and though she sometimes added, "even though they was 'Piscopals," I knew there was no intentional sarcasm in the remark,

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for in her later years her most valued friends were Episcopalians.

"I was only four year old when they took me into the house to begin raisin' me, and I don't remember anything before that; so it seems as if they was the first Christians I ever saw. And somehow it seems as if I begun to be a Christian right off then. I tried to be, I know that, for I wanted to follow my dear ladies in every single thing. Of course, when I was took into the Methodist Church, after I grew up and was freed, I had to be converted in their own way, so's to bear testimony and have a 'sperience to tell. But as far as I can see I felt just the same about those things before that time as I done afterwards; that is, I mean about believin' and lovin' and doin'. That's religion,—ain't it?" she would ask wistfully.

Could I say it was not? It seems a very simple creed, but not such a bad one,—just believing and loving and doing! I suppose that, in the abstract, Drusy disapproved of slavery, and thought freedom a good thing for her race, but I never heard her say so. Her own experience as a bondwoman had been

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pleasant, free from cruelty, injustice, or oppression, and in a certain way she seemed almost proud of her having been owned and valued by the old-time Virginia ladies whose memory she loved and revered. Sometimes, in speaking of some of her race whose conduct seemed reprehensible, she would say indulgently, "But then they didn't have my bringin' up; they was born free." No, St. Paul's boast as to his birth was not Drusy's, though no one prized more dearly than she her "glorious liberty" as a child of God.

As I write these things, many other little incidents of dear Drusy's religious life spring to my mind, and I hesitate as to which are most strikingly illustrative of her simple faith. Perhaps I have told you enough for this time.

I was not with her when she fell asleep. I had seen her not many weeks before, and was looking forward to meeting her again soon, when I heard she was very ill. Being a thousand miles away, I could not go to her. I wrote, but before she received my letter I had one from her, written by dictation, and telling me not to worry, for she was much better,—

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"almost well." I was greatly relieved. The closing words of the letter did not alarm me, and I saw no figurative meaning in them: "I shall be all right pretty soon, and I feel sure God is going to let us meet again in the old home."

It was her last message. We shall never meet, as we used, in that old house to which I thought she alluded, with its sad and glad memories and associations. But I hope and pray she will give me a glad welcome in an older—nay, a newer—home some day.

Those who were with her at the end tell me she went as she had lived, quietly, willingly, with few words, for they were not needed.

I felt that she would like the words upon her simple gravestone to be taken from her favorite Revelation, and I had cut there the passage,

"And they shall see His face."

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BENNY was a youth in his twentieth year when he entered my service, a few years after the close of the Civil War. He was a negro, very dark in color, but with a fine, strong face and a tall, well-built figure. He was from one of the Southern states where his mother had once been a slave. But she had purchased her freedom from her owner before Benny's birth. So he was born free, but as he was "bound out" when very young for a term of years he knew little of freedom until after the war and the emancipation of the slaves. He had, in some way, learned the alphabet, and could with difficulty spell out words of two or three letters. But his education really began when he came to me. For years we were associated as pupil and teacher. Never was there a more interesting scholar, a more delighted and absorbed instructor. Our reading book was the Bible. At different

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times I tried other books,—Robinson Crusoe in words of one syllable, a simple history of the United States, accounts of travels and shipwrecks,—but none of these seemed to appeal to Benny. The Bible, on the contrary, was intensely fascinating to him, and he never wearied of it. To me it was an unceasing delight to watch his interest in the old stories, so fresh and new to him, and to listen to his quaint, honest comments thereon.

In another walk of life, with what is styled a liberal education, Benny would probably have been a commentator, perhaps a reviser or translator of the inspired Book. As it was, he talked of the events recorded there as he might have spoken of recent occurrences witnessed by himself, and of their *dramatis personæ* as of well-known friends or acquaintances of his own. He had heard the gospel story and had, a short time before he came into my life, accepted for master and friend the One who makes that story so wonderful. But he knew little else of the Scriptures, almost nothing of the Old Testament narratives. How delightful it was to watch him hear or read them!

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Most of you have told these stories to little children to whom they were new and interesting, but think what it was to watch their effect upon an intelligent, quick-witted adult who heard them for the first time, and accepted them with simple faith. Why, even the story of the creation of the world was so exciting a tale, so full of breathless interest, that he could not wait to spell the longer words, but begged almost tearfully that I would help him so that he could see how it "come out." I remember when he stumbled over the last word in the line, "and the earth was without form and void." I pronounced the word for him and was proceeding to define it when he stopped me with, "Please don't, ma'am! I like it best that way when it ain't explained. I can just see how the earth looked when it hadn't any form nor any void neither." And he could see it, I doubt not, for his imagination was capable of great things. Afterward I grew to know well Benny's love for the mere sound of certain words whose meaning he did not know, and his unwillingness to have them defined. He once put his theory concerning this into form when he said:

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"Always 'pears to me like you can use words with a heap more power if you don't know what they mean." I have sometimes heard public speakers who seemed to hold similar views.

It was soon after this that Benny discovered for himself the doctrine of original sin and Adam's grave responsibility in the matter. He had spelled out laboriously, with much assistance from me—for such words as bdelium, Hiddekel, Havilah and Gihon are a little difficult for a beginner—the story of the garden, the forbidden fruit, the subtle serpent, and "Man's first disobedience." His reading was frequently interrupted by exclamations and comments. Adam's self-exculpatory, "She gave me of the tree," called forth a contemptuous, "S'pose she did, that isn't any excuse. You'd ought to be ashamed to blame it on your wife, Mister Adam."

Eve's defense, "The serpent beguiled me" (or as Benny always read it "begulled me"), was received with a fine scorn. "Well, what if he did done that, it don't clear you, does it?"

At the close of the narrative, when the pair

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had been driven from their Eden, and the flaming sword, with the sentinel cherubim, set on guard, Benny drew a long breath and was silent for a space. He was thinking deeply. Finally he said, "I've got a notion, maybe you'll think it foolish, ma'am, but readin' that account I've been thinkin' that them folks, Adam and Eve, bein' the very first folks that was made, why nat'rally we come down from 'em and they was our great-great-great-ever-so-many great grandfathers. So, you see, we might take after 'em in some things, and maybe we've all took after 'em bein' bad, not mindin' God's orders, wantin' what isn't good for us and all that. For we are that way right straight up from the time we're born, ain't we? It's only just a notion of my own, ma'am, but why couldn't it be so, their handin' down to we grand-children their own badness?"

I own this took my breath away. For one raised as I had been, to hear the doctrines of original sin, Adam's responsibility, and our inherited guilt, advanced by this simple soul as just a notion of his own was a little startling. Why, before I could read I had "lisped in

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numbers" the words from the "New England Primer,"

"In Adam's fall
We sinned all."

I had learned to repeat somewhat later the answer in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which tells us concerning our first ancestor that "all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression." Sermon after sermon on this subject had sounded in my young ears, and I had read heavy, ponderous works which treated of the matter; and now Benny looked into my face with his big, brown child eyes and claimed the doctrine as his own original "notion."

So we went on, reading all the old tales, of the deluge, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Joseph, of David and Solomon and the kings and prophets, Benny's interest and comments making the stories all new and vivid to me. Of course I cannot tell you all he said. It would fill a tome. His excitement was great as he read of the mighty flood and of Noah's ark-building. He frequently interpolated eager questions,—“Was Noah's folks all saved?”

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"Was everybody else drowned?" "Did the animals get through all right?" What a shuddering interest he showed in the account of Abraham's trial of faith, when his son lay on the altar for sacrifice. "Oh, tell me, *please*," he cried, "did Abraham do it? Did he do it? Course he'd got to mind God, but—oh, I hope God didn't keep him up to it. I hope he let him off!" He laughed aloud through real tears when he learned of the substituted "ram caught in the thicket by his horns."

"There now," he almost sobbed, "you see God was only tryin' him: you can trust him every time. I ought to knowed that, but I tell you I was scared."

It was a memorable day when we read the story of the personal combat between David and Goliath. No record of pugilistic encounter in the "ring" was ever received with more enthusiasm by lovers of the so-called manly art than was this narrative by my Benny. He laughed aloud; he shouted words of encouragement to the shepherd lad and hurled jeers and scoffs at the bragging giant. In vain I

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tried to subdue this uproarious appreciation of sacred history. He waved me aside, respectfully, but with firmness, crying eagerly, "Oh, I just can't help it; please let me get on, ma'am. I must see which whips; 'most know that boy does." When Goliath utters his scornful boast, "Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air," Benny sniffed contemptuously and muttered, "We'll see about that, sir. Mebbe them fowls will have somebody else to eat before long." But when he read David's response, with its modest confidence in God's ability to make him conqueror, a serious smile lighted up the dark face. "That's the talk," he said. "David couldn't do it all hisself and he knows it. But God can do just anything and he'll help him beat, you see if he don't." We all know that he did give the lad a glorious victory, though few of us remember when the knowledge first came to us. But I shall never forget Benny's extravagant delight over the result, or the peculiar way in which he celebrated the victory. That evening at dinner as he waited at table there was a suppressed excitement apparent in his

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manner, a sort of restless impatience at any delay or lingering over the meal, not usual in the youth. This was explained when, with the dessert, our waiter proudly brought in a loaf of frosted cake, garnished with flowers and having a small American flag in the center. At our exclamation of surprise Benny chuckled and said, "That's on 'count of the great vict'ry,—David's, you know. We wasn't any of us there to celebrate at the time and I reckoned we'd ought to take some notice of it now."

Though Benny was always chivalrous and respectful in his attitude toward women he showed sometimes an instinctive masculine sense of superiority in treating of our sex. One Sunday afternoon our clergyman dropped in to chat over a church matter, and asked how Benny was progressing. Anxious to display my pupil's attainments I called him in to tell the minister about his latest lesson. This was the story of Job, which the boy had found highly interesting. Dr. Stark asked many questions which were answered promptly and well, and I felt the successful teacher's thrill of pride. When the point in the narrative had

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been reached where the wife of the patient sufferer gave her husband the despairing counsel to curse his Maker and die, Dr. Stark asked,

“And what did Job answer to this?”

Now the words of Scripture in which Benny should have replied run thus: “But he said unto her, thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.” This, to my mortification as teacher and woman, was interpreted by honest Ben thus:

“Why, Job says to Mis’ Job, he says, you talk fool talk like any other woman,” and my show-pupil was dismissed for the day.

The late Charles Dudley Warner was a frequent visitor at our home, and a good friend to Benny, who one day asked me if Mr. Warner did not write books. When I answered that he had written several I was asked as to the sort of books they were. I explained that these works were not stories but what were called essays, adding, “I think that is a new word to you. Shall I explain it?”

“Oh, no,” said Benny quickly. “I’ve read about ’em in the Bible.”

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Somewhat surprised, I asked in what part of Scripture he had found this allusion. He at once explained that, in the account in Acts of Philip's encounter with the great man of Ethiopia, it said that the latter was "settin' in his carriage readin' essays." The passage you will remember, runs thus, "And sitting in his chariot read Esaias."

The particular copy of the Bible from which Benny always read was a large illustrated volume published in Hartford by Judd, Loomis and Company in 1836. It lies on the table before me now as I write. It has many pictures, small, inferior wood-cuts, six on a page at intervals through the volume. These illustrations were an unending source of delight and wonder to Benny. In spite of all our efforts to enlighten him he always felt that the pictures were actual representations of the scenes and characters pictured therein. When we told him that the drawings were made in modern times by artists who, of course had never seen the Scripture worthies represented, his response was invariably the same, "Then they did 'em from likenesses took at the time;

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the Bible people set for 'em I know. Folks wouldn't dast make 'em up out of their own heads." Because of this assurance Benny would often startle us by saying that he had met a man that day, "the very image of Dan'l only a mite fleshier." Or he would speak of having seen at the store a "lady something like Hagar but taller and not cross lookin'."

There was a venerable deacon in the village church near the Ferns who reminded Benny so strongly of Moses in looks that he felt sure the two must be blood relatives and that Deacon Weed had "come down" from the great leader of the exodus. He sometimes expressed a fear that our worthy but not over energetic deacon had "fell off" in a measure from the standard set by his noted ancestor. One evening as I passed through the kitchen I saw Benny as usual poring over the big Bible open on the table before him. I looked over his shoulder and, without lifting his eyes from the page he said earnestly, "Ain't it dreadful? If he'd a looked at me that way I should have fell right off; I know I would." "What is it, Benny?" I asked "fell off of what?"

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"Why, that jackass," he answered pointing, as he spoke, at one of the pictures. This I saw represented Balaam and the ass, the latter in the act of turning his head to expostulate with his alarmed rider. The artist had certainly succeeded in putting a very sinister and knowing expression into the animal's eyes, one of which actually seemed to roll viciously.

"Jest see that look in his eye, ma'am," said Benny in an awed tone, "Oh, it's a bad look. They took the pictur' just as he begun to talk back, and how Balaam ever stuck on to his back after that beats me. *I* never could a done it nohow, I know."

Time would fail me to tell of all Benny's comments on the wonderful tales he read in that old Book, what he said of Elijah, of Ruth, of Daniel, Esther, and the prophets. One of many lessons I learned from him, one of the truths I discovered, was this: I saw plainly for the first time in my life that one could see the humorous in those old narratives, while all the time maintaining a reverential attitude toward them and their source.

This was more markedly displayed when we

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read the New Testament stories. I have rarely met with greater love and veneration than this simple believer showed for the Master. Many, many times have I heard his soft, mellow, Southern voice tremble and break as he read of those last days of the blessed Lord's earthly life. Often, often, have I come upon him as he sat alone on the doorstep of our country home, the Ferns, spelling out with moving finger from the big Bible the same sorrowful record, his eyes wet with tears, his dark face quivering with emotion. But he smiled, nay, laughed aloud, though always indulgently, over the attributes of the all-human characters portrayed in the Gospels and Acts. He had an amused fellow feeling for Zaccheus, "little of stature," as he climbed the tall sycamore tree in his anxiety to "see Jesus who he was." The picture of the demon-driven swine flying down a steep place into the sea brought invariably a merry laugh. But of all personages having their part in the divine story, Peter was his favorite hero and Peter amused him most. To this day my memory of his attitude toward that very human apostle

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has its effect, and I find myself sometimes almost smiling the same loving, indulgent smile that Benny's dark face always wore at mention of Peter. By some strange intuition, the lad seemed to understand the great apostle with his virtues, his faults and mistakes, better perhaps than other wiser, more learned students.

"Oh, he was all right, Peter was," he would say earnestly. "He always meant well, and he was good, real good. But he had queer ways. I've seen folks just exactly like him in some things, always thinkin' he could do everything better than anybody else, braggin' about what he dast do and how much better he could love folks than anybody else, and how he never'd, never'd go back on his friends or be scared of anything, and then slippin' up first time on all them points."

So when Benny read of Peter's "rebuking" our Lord and refusing to believe what he foretold of his coming sorrows, when he heard of his seeming boast of how much he had sacrificed for his Master and his inquiry as to the reward he should receive, when he learned



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of his eager assurances of unfailing love and loyalty to Jesus and of the terrible failure in time of trial, his inability to watch even one hour in that last lonely vigil, of the shrinking fears which made him prove false to his vows and led him to his base denial, my scholar showed little wonder and no bitter scorn. He would smile and shake his head. "Might 'a' knowed it," he would say, "braggin' and then slippin' up, braggin' and then slippin' up. Oh, that's his way, but he'll come out all right, you see if he don't." And when he read of the Master's earnest questioning of the penitent disciple, that heartbreaking "Lovest thou me?" and Peter's mournful, "Thou knowest," he laughed as well as cried, saying hysterically, "And he did love Him and He knowed it all the time, but He was just trying him."

The account given by Matthew of the night upon the Sea of Galilee, when our Lord went out to his storm-tossed followers, walking upon the water and filling their childish, human souls with fears of the supernatural, and disembodied spirits, was one of Benny's favorite stories. For a long time his apparent levity,

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the unsuppressed merriment with which he heard or read it, really shocked me. He saw this and tried to control himself. But the picture of his friend and hero whom he loved so well in spite of the idiosyncrasies he so fully appreciated, the thought of him springing into the waves with his usual self-confidence to go to his Master, and then giving way to terror and crying for help, seemed to the youth overpoweringly amusing. In response to my looks and words of disapproval he would gasp out as well as he could, "Oh, please don't be mad. I ain't disrespectful. There ain't anybody in the whole world that thinks more of Peter than I do, you know that, but then I understand him and he always makes me laugh. And I know just how he felt that time. He see Jesus walkin' on the top of the water and it looked so easy he was sure he could do it hisself. That's the way I used to think when I see folks skatin', before I learnt how. It looked just as easy and I'd think I could do it too, but, tell ye, when I put skates on and tried—! Peter he found it that way too and see how scaret he was and how he hollered out for help,

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first thing." And again his big frame would shake with mirth, honest and, I firmly believe, in no wise irreverent. As he said to me many times in speaking of the matter, "Peter wouldn't mind my laughin'. I'd just as lief do it right before his face. And I reckon I shall some day, when I see him."

That leads me to Benny's ideas of another life and of the heaven he hoped and expected to reach.

No one who knew him could doubt his being an earnest, honest Christian, and I knew well how he loved his Lord and longed to see him face to face and know the joys of the blessed. But one of his often-expressed desires used to puzzle me.

"Do you know," once asked a young relative of mine, who was much attached to Benny and received from him many confidences, "do you know why Ben is so anxious to get to heaven? He talks to me about it by the hour but you could never guess. He wants to see Samson!"

Very soon the lad expressed the same desire to me and tried to explain his reasons. He was himself gifted with great physical strength

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and very proud of this. No one in the neighborhood could lift such heavy weights so easily, with so little apparent effort, and Samson too was a strong man. As Benny said, "He's called the strongest man that ever was, you know, and he done a heap of big liftin'. But 'tisin't always strength that makes you do that; it's knack. Now my notion is that Samson had a knack of heftin'. 'Twas his own knack and he wouldn't show anybody else how he done it, so they thought it was all his great strength. Now I've got a knack too. I ain't any stronger really than Aleck Staggs, but he can't begin to put as heavy a trunk on his shoulder as I can, because I've got a knack, a knack of heftin'. So when I get to heaven I want to talk to Samson. Down here 'course he wouldn't tell his secret, but up there he won't care, and I 'most know he'll show me how he done it."

"But, Benny," I said, somewhat shocked at this purely earthly craving in his desire to depart, "is that your only reason for wanting to go to heaven? Is there no one else you long to see?"

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He gave me one look and I felt ashamed of my doubts even before he cried reproachfully, "Oh, I thought *you'd* understand, ma'am. Don't you think I knew better than that who I'd ought to speak to first of all, who I *want* to speak to? Why, even down here in the world I've got manners enough to know when I go to a house, to a party or anything, that I'd ought to speak first to the head of the house. And then—I don't want to make you feel bad, ma'am, but you know who else I want to see most, my dear old master at the Ferns. But after I'd done that I reckoned they'd let me go in back and talk with Samson." He invariably used this expression, "in back" in speaking of the strong man's present abiding-place, and I once asked him why he did this. It seemed that for some reason he could not explain he had assumed that Samson, the Nazirite, was now employed in the kitchen department or servants' quarters of the home so real and desirable to his simple soul.

When the reports and forecasts of the Government Weather Bureau began to be printed in the newspapers (I think it was not called the

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Weather Bureau then; it was in the days of the so-styled "Old Probabilities"), Benny was much disturbed. He could not bear to hear us read or quote them. He insisted that only God knew what the weather would be and nobody else had a right to prophesy concerning it. He quoted passage after passage from the Bible to show this. If we told him that the morning paper promised a change of wind he shook his head scornfully and said, quoting with a free translation, "The wind blows where it's got a mind to and nobody can't tell where it comes from nor where it goes to." If we told him of the forecast for the coming day he would say impatiently, "Didn't the Lord forbid that kind o' thing? Didn't he say 'Don't take no thought for to-morrow'?" One day when—perhaps to test him and draw out his amusing opposition—the head of the house spoke in praise of the wonderful foreknowledge of the weather prophets of that time, Benny burst out vehemently with, "They had 'em in Bible times too, and you know what the Lord said about 'em. A lot of them weather-wisers came to him and asked him

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about weather signs. What did he say about it? He said they theyselves was always a guessin' and sayin' if the sky was all red at night 'twould be fair next day, and if 'twas red in the morning they'd say 'twas going to be bad afore night, but fact was they didn't know nothin' about it, and as for him he wouldn't help 'em a mite or give 'em any sign to guess by. And he sent 'em off and a good thing too."

"But if they see a storm traveling toward us and warn us of it, Benny, is not that a good thing?" asked my young nephew one day.

"No, sir," quickly replied the skeptical Benny. "If he see they'd got it right that time, he'd just hurry and change his orders, and the storm would go the other way."

This same nephew, a boy of ten or eleven, was sometimes much troubled and bewildered by Benny's apparent heresies. One day he came to me almost in tears, saying sadly that Benny had been "making fun of the attraction of gravitation. He says there isn't any such thing, auntie. I've told him all about it and about how it was found out by that apple dropping off the tree, but he just laughs at it.

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Won't you please tell him it's so?" Benny stood near, a half-ashamed look on his face, which, however, wore a determined expression as if he would say with Galileo, "It does move." At my questioning he spoke up bravely, though respectfully:

"Why course there ain't any such thing, ma'am, 'less it's only a queer name you give to God and what he can do. Master Charley says that if you drop a thing it'll fall down to the ground. Anybody knows that. But he says it's this 'traction gravitation business does it. No, it ain't, it's God. Master Charley says, 'It couldn't fall up, could it?' and I says yes, if God wanted it to. He says, 'Well, it never did and it never will.' And I says how do you know that? If you go on doubtin', God'll make it go the other way and everything will fall up 'stead o' down, and then where'll your old 'traction be?"

It was not only while he was a youth that Benny lived in my household. He served me—oh, so faithfully and well!—for more than twenty years, and was still in my employ when, a man in middle age, he passed from earth.

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He was stricken down very suddenly, but lingered ill and helpless, for several days. He was conscious, I think, almost to the last, but spoke little, and at times his mind seemed to wander. I sat by his bed a great part of the time, and he seemed to like to have me there. Sometimes I read to him or repeated his favorite verses. When he was first ill I took the large illustrated Bible of which I have spoken and sat turning the leaves in search of a fitting passage to read aloud. Benny opened his languid eyes, shook his head and whispered:

"Not that Bible, the other one, his." I went to my room and brought the small morocco-covered book used by the master of the Ferns, at rest long before, and Benny smiled content. Afterward it was always from that volume that I read to him. Once as I began, "The Lord is my shepherd," he smiled and said, "David," and a moment later, "a stone of the water." I knew he was thinking of the shepherd lad and the pebble from the brook. But his favorite chapter in those hours was that one, loved by so many weary souls, the fourteenth of John, "Let not

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your heart be troubled." When one evening I began to read verses from the Sermon on the Mount, which he had always loved and much of which he had committed to memory, he shook his head and said, "Many mansions, many mansions," and I knew he wanted to hear about the Father's house. As I read slowly the verse, "In my Father's house are many mansions," he whispered again, "David;" then, after a pause, "Samson;" a long pause; then a smile, the ghost of that amused, indulgent, loving smile which always of old greeted the name, and he breathed out softly, "Peter."

He passed away quietly, his hand, that strong, black hand which had done its work so well, in my own.

I know that he is "forever with the Lord" (I can hear his mellow voice still as he used to sing that hymn to old Dennis); I feel that he has met again the dear earthly master whom he served so well at the Ferns, and I fully believe that he has seen his hero, Peter, the impetuous, impulsive, loving disciple, and perhaps has gone as he wished "in back" for a confidential talk with Samson about his "knack of hef-

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tin'." His grave is in the same old cemetery where lies a few feet away, my good old Drusy of simple faith. And on the plain, white stone are cut the words,

"Well done, good and faithful servant."



